



Title Work and leisure today: a feminist exploration
 in Sofia

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WORK AND LEISURE TODAY:
A FEMINIST EXPLORATION IN SOFIA

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Ph.D.

2017

UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE

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WORK AND LEISURE TODAY: A FEMINIST EXPLORATION IN SOFIA

by

Stefani Kaldaramova

A thesis submitted to the University of Bedfordshire in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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WORK AND LEISURE TODAY: A FEMINIST EXPLORATION IN SOFIA

S. KALDARAMOVA

ABSTRACT

Throughout Bulgarian history, the dominant pattern of gender relations has always been the patriarchal one. Since 1989, the wind of change in restructured Europe has blown into Bulgaria many new cultural, political and social ideas and influences, but has subdued little of the conservative values and normative gender discourse. In fact, women's position in the public and the private spheres did not change much during the transitional period and consequent democratisation and restructuring of the economy, throughout which, Bulgarian women faced numerous challenges in balancing work/leisure and family. Yet, no comprehensive research study exists, which explores the problematics of the work-leisure relationship for the generation of women that came of age during this transitional period. This research study examines the work and leisure meanings for full-time employed, Generation Y, women in Sofia (Bulgaria) in order to shine light on the way they negotiate gendered constraints in everyday life and propose areas for further investigation. To accomplish this aim, feminist, case study methodology is utilised. Moreover, the epistemological problematics of the feminist research process are addressed by the researcher's reflexivity and autoethnography. The method of personal narrative is chosen to reflect the invisibility of neoliberal structural constraints and situates personal experiences in the process of existing inequalities. Thus, a better understanding of the role and position of the researcher in this study is presented.

The research findings illustrate the ways leisure and work meanings are constructed in the context of post-feminist guise of equality, in which, young Sofian women are now attributed

with capacity. This is exemplified by participant's conceptualisations of work, leisure and gender culture. Individual women express contradictory view about gender roles, femininity and masculinity that illustrate a collective sense of rejection of feminism (in its mainstream sense) as a threat to heterosexual gender relations. Findings reveal that Generation Y, Sofian women's femininity does not necessarily fit into a simple polarity, that is either 'traditional' (women as wives/mothers and labourers) or 'modern' (assimilating to 'Western' values and lifestyles). Rather, their identities relate to both of these selves and are becoming increasingly hybrid and fluid. Their leisure is central life pursuit and arguably exists to empower women to resist gender inequalities, perpetuated by both new and old gender discourses and ideologies. Drawing from the contemporary field of feminist leisure studies with a an explicit focus on interdisciplinarity and post-structural feminisms the study wishes to contribute to existing debates on women's multiple leisure meanings and leisure as an experiences that empower individuals and, more broadly, challenge cultural norms about women's embodied capacities. Finally, management and operational bodies of the leisure industries can potentially use this case study to facilitate leisure opportunities, services and products for Generation Y, Sofian women, who are now active participants in the capitalist, consumer culture.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to all members of my family:

My father, Nikolay Kaldaramov; my mother, Dimitrina Kostova; my brother, Hristofor Kaldaramov; and my aunt, Nelly Kostova

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Glossary

Term/Concept	Definition
Androcentrism	for something, such as a theory or a right, to be androcentric means that it centres on men or that it is biased because of its focus on men (McHugh, 2007: 6-7).
Autoethnography	Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno) (Anderson, 2006; Ellis, 1991, 1995, 2004).
Culture	In this thesis the anthropological understanding of culture associated with Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown to designate culture as ‘a whole and distinctive way of life’ is meant (Barker 2004:44). That is ‘the meanings and practices of ordinary men and women that composed culture. In this view, culture is constituted by the tapestry of texts, practices and meanings generated by every one of us as we conduct our lives’ (Barker, 2004:44–45).
Discourse	For the purpose of this research study, the term discourse is used in a way that derives from the work of Foucault. It is said to ‘unite’ language and practice and refers to regulated ways of speaking about a subject through which objects and practices acquire meaning. The production of knowledge through language that gives meaning to material objects and social practices we may call discursive practices (Barker, 2004).
Dialectic	This (also <i>dialectics</i> and <i>the dialectical method</i>) is a method of examining and discussing opposing ideas in order to find ‘the truth’. The word <i>dialectic</i> originated in ancient Greece, and was made popular by Plato in the Socratic dialogues. The Hegelian model of thesis–antithesis–synthesis offers a back-and-forth scheme of the dialectic. In this study, a simplified dialectic will be used: an explanatory thesis is offered, countered by a disproving antithesis, and out of the clash of the two a more adequate synthesis is produced (Baxter and Montgomery, 1996).

Double burden	This is a term describing the workload of men and women who work to earn money, but also have responsibility for unpaid, domestic work. This phenomenon is also known as the 'The Second Shift' as in Arlie Hochschild's book of the same name. In heterosexual couples where both partners have paid jobs, women often spend significantly more time on household chores and caring work, such as childrearing or caring for the sick, than men. This outcome is determined in large part by traditional gender roles that have been accepted by society over time. Labour market constraints also play a role in determining who does the bulk of unpaid work (Hochschild, 1989).
'Ethic of care'	Care-focused feminism is a branch of feminist thought, informed primarily by ethics of care as developed by Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings. This body of theory is critical of how caring is socially engendered to women and consequently devalued. Gilligan argues that girls and women approached ethical situations differently than men through connectedness and the primacy of caring relationships instead of through abstract principles that are the foundation for the ethics of justice (McHugh, 2007).
Experience	Scott (1991) argues that merely focusing on and recognising experience does not explain how this experience emerged and what its material, historical and social circumstances are. As this research study attends to these circumstances and their nature, the concept of experience is referred to in terms of 'lived meaningful experiences' of women in the cultural context, which is accessed through the discourse created by them (Barker, 2004: 65).

Feminist empiricism	Broadly speaking, feminist empiricism is any epistemology that combines <i>empiricist methodology</i> with <i>feminist political goals</i> . It is a matter of controversy, however, whether this combination is viable. Many feminists believe that empiricist methods are by their nature incompatible with the pursuit of feminist political goals. Sandra Harding, for example, has argued that the goal of removing sexism and androcentrism cannot be achieved by applying the existing empiricist norms of scientific inquiry. Her argument is that empiricist methodology, because it is rooted in positivism, ignores the role of contextual values in science and lacks sufficient reflexivity and objectivity to situate itself in the same plane as the objects under study (Campbell, 1994).
Femininity	An identity category that refers to the social and cultural characteristics associated with being female. It is a discursive-performative construction that describes the cultural meaning of being a women (Barker, 2004:68).
Gender (role) ideology	This is defined as a set of attitudes and beliefs about the proper roles of women and men in the family or society, which could be considered in a continuum ranging from egalitarian to traditional values (Korabik <i>et al.</i> , 2008).
Meaning(s)	The idea of meaning(s) is central to this feminist research study, as it stresses the importance and intersection of concepts like power, ideology and discourse, that are all culturally bound. In other words these concepts depend on some notions of meaning that lie in the attitudes, believes, purposes, justifications and reasons deployed by women in day-to-day life. Meaning guides one's actions and it can be understood as an explanation or a justification for these actions (Barker, 2004). It should be noted that this is just a simplified view of a much more complex philosophical and linguistic debate that is not a focus of investigation.

Neoliberalism	Coming to the fore in the late 1970s and early 1980s within most Western democracies, neoliberalism as an alternative political philosophy was strategically advance based on the need to dismantle the basic institutional components of the post-war social welfare and mobilize policies intended to extend market discipline, competition, and commodification throughout society. The basic prescription of neoliberalism is the same: purge the system of obstacles to the functioning of free markets; celebrate the virtues of individualism (recast social problems as individual problems); foster economic self-sufficiency; abolish or weaken social programmes; include those marginalized into the labour market on the market's terms (such as through the workfare scheme); and, criminalize the homeless and the urban poor (Giroux, 2005, Jessica Francombe-Webb, 2015: 654).
Women's oppression	In this thesis, by 'oppression' the author means: the cultural practices and beliefs that may be considered harmful to women. These practices and beliefs are rooted in the old, patriarchal norms, beliefs and practices that still influence contemporary women's lives.
Social	The idea of the social is commonly taken to mean 'of or in society', where society is understood to be an autonomous sphere of activity formed through the organisation of rule-governed human relations and interactions. (Barker, 2004:185). In this thesis, I adopt the post-structuralist view that the 'social' is not a proper object of analysis but a discursive construction of reality. Consequently, 'society' is understood to be an unstable system of discursive differences in which socio-political identities represent the open and contingent articulation of cultural and political categories (Barker, 2004:184).
Socio-cultural nexus (SCN):	According to Aitchison (2003:8–9), 'the socio-cultural nexus is perceived as both a site and process in the construction, legitimation, reproduction and reworking of gender and leisure relations'.

Standpoint feminist epistemology	Feminist standpoint theorists make three principal claims: (1) Knowledge is socially situated. (2) Marginalised groups are socially situated in ways that make it more possible for them to be aware of things and ask questions than it is for the non-marginalised. (3) Research that is focused on power relations should begin with the lives of the marginalised (Oleson, 2005).
Postfeminism	According to Braithwaite (2002: 337) 'postfeminism refers both chronologically and semantically to that which comes 'after' feminism as a current, largely negative, sometimes even hostile reaction against earlier feminism'.

Source: Contains materials from Barker (2004), Ellis (2004), Korabik *et al.* (2008)

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

1.1 Research Background

The foundational examination of women's leisure developed from the recognition of women's 'oppression' and the diminished quality of life for all women (Henderson, 2013). In the early 1980s, the limited-scope research (gathered mainly from the United Kingdom, North America and Australia) suggested that women shared a commonality in their leisure meanings (Henderson, 1990a), so research efforts focused on broadening the understanding of these meanings through exploring new topics from women's everyday lives. As academic research on gender and leisure progressed, scholars began recognising the complexities of this type of analysis, which now acknowledges that women are not a homogenous group with the same life experiences (Henderson *et al.*, 1996). Therefore, one approach or a grand narrative to explanation will, arguably, prove futile (Henderson and Gibson, 2013). Recently, themes like resistance and empowerment through leisure (Freysinger and Flannery, 1992; Shaw, 2001), feminist frameworks (Fox, 1992; Henderson, 1991b, 1993; Shaw, 1992a; Yule, 1992) intersectionality and international cultural descriptions began to emerge in leisure research (Henderson and Gibson, 2013). Still, more than 30 years since the first pioneering studies, research on women and leisure remains predominantly authored by women from Western countries, and non-Western scholars remain the silent 'other' (Kotzeva, 1999). In order to answer questions about women's leisure from a different, non-Western cultural perspective, it is important to note that gender is not only a political, cultural and epistemic category, but a historical one as well (Kotzeva, 1999).

Section 1.1.1 introduces a simplified historical account of the origins of Bulgarian women's 'oppression'. The review focuses on the predominant traditions: Orthodox Christianity, Orientalism, the socialist agenda, and the complex local and global forces that reshaped Bulgarian society after the collapse of totalitarianism throughout Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Section 1.1.2 provides a rationale for focusing on Generation Y, Sofian women as a

target population and explains the theoretical underpinning of the research sample of young, middle-class, full-time employed women. Finally, this chapter states the originality of the research inquiry reviews the study's methodological approach and presents the structure of the thesis.

1.1.1 Historical context of the study (the origin of the gender discourses)

According to Bulgarian feminist scholars like Panova *et al.* (1993), Todorova (1994) and Nestorova (1996) there are, conceivably, three predominant traditions that shaped women's roles and position in society prior to the regime change in 1989:

1.1.1.1 Patriarchal Eastern Orthodoxy

Christianity (adopted in the ninth century) formed the basis of Bulgarian national identity. It has had a profound effect on the structures of everyday life and the function and organisation of the family (Panova *et al.*, 1993). Christianity introduced role assignment to both genders, suggesting women's inferior position based on biological principles and the 'nature' of women (Panova *et al.*, 1993). In this regard, the greatest impact of the Christian religion to gender roles in Bulgaria was the over-emphasis on the reproductive function of women, which confines them to the private, domestic sphere.

1.1.1.2 The Oriental Tradition

In 1397, Ottoman Turks occupied Bulgarian lands. The Islamic religion was adopted by a significant percentage of the population, which affected gender roles and relations within the private sphere and public life. Within the Islamic tradition, the primary role of man is that of breadwinner and the primary role of women is that of child-bearer (Panova *et al.*, 1993). Similar to Christianity, the Islamic religion was equally discriminatory against women, assigning countless restrictions in everyday life and conceiving them merely as mothers, wives and homemakers (Panova *et al.*, 1993). Both doctrines are highly patriarchal and although they do not specifically regard women as inferior to men, they instil notions and

ideas that normalise and stereotype archaic gender roles and behaviour for both man and women (Todorova, 1994).

Up until the Second World War, Bulgaria was a country with primarily agricultural population and women were active participants in the agrarian work force (Todorova, 1994). Peasant man and women shared labour and family responsibilities, nevertheless, it was women's reproductive function that confined them to the home and all the affairs of the household; the patriarchal authority of the man was practically unchallenged (Todorova, 1994; Nestorova, 1996). Thus, Bulgarian women's leisure could be understood in the sense of pursuing activities with moral, cultural and family-related significance including playing a crucial role in preserving and reinforcing religious traditions and values and national identity. This was accomplished, mostly through following the national traditions, religious festivities and holidays – an important role reserved for the Bulgarian homemaker. Leisure might be considered not merely as a pursuit of personal pleasure, but as an important function that occurred within the nuclear family and the community. The centrality of the family as the main preservative unit of Bulgarian national identity throughout the centuries played a crucial role in the creation of Bulgarian women's identity as the guardian of traditions and women as homemakers. Inevitably, mother would teach daughter to aspire to marriage as a central life goal (Todorova, 1994; Nestorova, 1996).

1.1.1.3 The Totalitarian Socialist Tradition

After World War II, a totalitarian political system was established in Bulgaria. Women were about to be liberated from 'the chains of capitalism' and their servitude to their families, husbands and father-in-laws by becoming members of the paid labour force (Ghodsee, 2004; Koeva and Bould, 2007). This resulted in women being trapped in their traditional roles as mothers, career and wives and their new roles as full-time employees (Panova *et al.*, 1993, Todorova, 1994). In fact, full-time employment did not mitigate family and domestic responsibilities, mostly carried out by women, whose emancipation was acknowledged as an

aspect of the class struggle (Merdjanska and Panova, 1995: 24). In contrast with their Western counterparties, Bulgarian women did not see employment as an advantage, in economic or in personal terms. Instead, the combined demands of work, family responsibilities and the requirement of building a socialist utopia, left women with little control over their 'free' time. Nevertheless, the 'double burden' of paid employment and family responsibilities is an issue with both positive and negative aspects. For example, this period was marked by women's active participation in the nation's economy and labour force and women's full legal and political rights were granted through appropriate legislation (Nestorova, 1996). The state provided services which aimed to alleviate the 'double burden' of working mothers and guarantee them social support and paid maternity leave (Koeva and Bould, 2007; Ghodsee, 2004). There was real commitment to women's education and incorporation into the workforce, which resulted in some of the highest labour force participation rates in Europe (Ghodsee, 2004). However, the negatives effects outweigh the positives since man's patriarchal rule remained unchallenged. Daskalova (2005) argues that despite these emancipator means, women's traditional roles and inferior position remained unchanged. Gender discrimination and occupational segregation continued to flourish under socialism (Ghodsee, 2004). Thus, women's employment in Bulgaria became institutionalised and legitimatised by the dominant gendered discourses, as they remained trapped in their 'double burden' regardless of the governmental efforts to reshape gender relations in the country (Ghodsee, 2004).

In summation, the gendered division of labour, was regulated and sanctioned by the Orthodox Church, the Ottoman legacy and the effects of the Marxist–Leninist ideology. Although many women were held in high regard, enjoyed a degree of respect and their opinions regarding family all affairs were considered, the patriarchal authority of the husband was unlimited (Nestorova, 1996). Consequently, the status and position of women revolved around the three major roles of mother/carerer, labourer and wife (Koeva and Bould, 2007).

1.1.1.4 Post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and post-socialist Bulgaria

The 1989 collapse of communism across Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) marked the end of a socio-political, economic and national division of the continent (Henderson, 1999). In the 1990s, the idea of unifying Europe became a reality, when the European Council (EC) opened negotiations with former socialist countries who applied for membership in The European Union (EU). Henderson (1999) and Hall (2008) claim that for the new market economies of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), the prospect of joining the EU, symbolised the ultimate achievement of 'returning back to Europe' (Henderson, 1999: vi), along with freedom, democracy and economic prosperity (Hall, 1998a, 1998b). A decade later, research showed that some countries had more success in dealing with the challenges of economic and socio-political transformations than others (Kopstein and Reilly, 2000). For instance, countries like Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovenia have made significant progress in their efforts towards modernisation and democratisation, whereas Albania, Romania, Bulgaria and the former non-Baltic soviet republics were less successful. The variations in progress and development are indicative of the complex geopolitics of the entire region, which although sharing a common ex-socialist past have become increasingly differentiated, both politically and economically (Kopstein and Reilly, 2000) during the transitional period.

It has been more than 25 years since the transformations began and many of the CEE countries, including Bulgaria, still struggle with issues of emigration, institutional integration, sustainable development strategies, globalisation, differentiation/uniqueness identities, innovation and the 24/7 workplace (Balazs *et al.*, 2014:10). These issues may be a result of the economic crisis, of ineffective post-accession conditionality on the part of the EU, or of democratising too fast, too soon, without rooting far-reaching reforms in local mentalities (Merdjanska and Panova, 1995). Whatever the reasons, Bulgaria have undergone significant changes in the past decades in order to become a democratic member of the European and world communities. Still, many of the changes are ongoing (Ivanova, 2017), especially in

terms of issues of equality that are fundamental for any democratic state. This study aims to shine light on a cohort of women that have been paid little attention in both Eastern and Western academic context and answer questions about the multiple meanings of leisure in relation to work and the gendered context of everyday life.

a) Gender and employment after state socialism

Bulgarians shared the expectations that the fall of socialism will improve living standards in the country, thus underestimating the depth of the forthcoming economic crisis (Paskaleva *et al.*, 1998; Stoilova, 2006). The idealisation of the market economy and political democracy led to the misleading assumption that these systems will automatically bring equality and prosperity to women (Todorova, 1993). In reality, the economy was struggling and a majority of social problems such as high rates of divorce, negative population growth, mass impoverishment, employment decline, worsening health status and high emigration rates (Weylen, 2003; Tang and Cousins, 2005) appeared a reflection of the crises. In the first years of the transition, women were the first to lose their jobs and opportunities for work outside the family declined (Merdjanska and Panova, 1995). Still, little attention was paid to issues of gender equality, even though Bulgarian women faced various challenges in adapting to the new socio-economic situation (Daskalova, 2000).

According to Stoilova (2006) the first years of the democratisation period brought considerable changes in the pattern of women's (and men's) employment. The job security that socialism rendered was replaced with privatisation, liberalisation of prices and salaries restricted the control of the state over the market, which led to decline in real wages, increase of prices, and decrease in the overall number of jobs. This resulted in mass unemployment, reaching its peak of 21.4% in 1993 (Stoilova, 2006; National Statistical Institute, 2005), gender segregation and discrimination of the capitalist labour market (Daskalova, 2005). Kostova (1998) claims that Bulgarian women's employment changed from a state of stability and permanence of the state-run enterprises accompanied by long maternity leave and parental sick leave, to a state of insecurity of the less protected private

sector. Consequently, some women were forced to work in the so-called informal or grey economy of the country, which also led to less protection, less job security and longer working weeks (Kostova, 1998; Stoilova, 2006). Women working in this sector often suffered from unfavourable, even hard work conditions, lack of social security benefits, limited access to pension and health benefits. In practice, there was no legal protection against injury or discrimination (Stoilova, 2006).

Women working within the countries' grey economy were not the only ones who have lost, fully or partly, their employment rights. According to Stoilova (2006) and Kostova (1998) most of the benefits that have been created during the socialist period to support women's participation in paid work have been reduced or removed and it became 'increasingly difficult for mothers and would-be mothers to participate in the labour force on an equal foot with men' (Stoilova, 2006:8). Statistical data suggested that the most significant gender differences in employment rate were observed in the 25-34 age group where the female employment rate was 10% lower than male with little change during the democratic period (National Statistical Institute, 2005). Young women had less access to the labour market because of employer's reluctance to offer jobs to young women who had children or who were seen as likely to have children in near future. Consequently, the dilemma work/possible career, or family, husband and/or children became relevant for many young Bulgarian women to whom the free labour market has been hostile (Daskalova, 2005; Stoilova, 2006). That is why this study focuses on investigating the work and leisure meanings of the generation born a few years before or just after the 1989 revolution (see section 1.1.2), as paucity of information exists about these women's leisure and work meanings and the way women negotiate their freedoms and constraint vis-à-vis the dominant gender ideologies and discourses and the current global and political order.

Another vulnerable group of women that represents a high-risk category at the post-socialist labour market in Bulgaria is the group of women close to retiring age, and retired women

(Stoilova, 2006). The labour market saw these women (i.e. age group above 45 years old) as too old to re-qualify, which made it very difficult for women at this age to find employment, once they have lost the one that they had. The vulnerability of this cohort was perpetuated, mostly, by the fact that they had received their training and education during the socialist period and their experience might have been difficult to apply in the new liberal market. Moreover, they were seen as a liability that is not worth 'investing' in because of their specific age requirements for particular positions (Stoilova, 2006).

In conclusion, the employment circumstances of women in post-socialist societies are difficult to theorise because there is both continuity and change in the construction of gender relations in the aftermath of socialism. For instance, within the Bulgarian context, the transitional period is characterised by its mostly detrimental effect on women's employment and position within the social and the private spheres. However, even though governments have failed to prevent women from being marginalised, on the assumption that reforms are gender neutral, the generational differences and similarities in terms of employment experience and regime change should not be disregarded. In fact, the combination of age factor and experience of socialist regimes make it more difficult for women from the socialist cohort to adapt to the new regime, in contrast with younger women, who appeared to perceive their employment as a part of the process of individualisation or as means of acquiring the lifestyle or career they want. The problems of these two groups of women are very different, specific to the cohort, and should be researched and addressed separately, Stoilova (2006) advises.

b) Gender and the Family: a comparison between East/West; socialism and post-socialism

The private sphere of the family played a critical role in the lives of people in totalitarian states because it was regarded as a place of protection from the authority of the state, which regulated all economic and social activity. However, although the family sphere sheltered the

intimate, private lives of individuals from the state, it also sustained traditional gender roles and maternalist essentialism (Einhorn, 1993). Therefore, the state was unable to 'liberate women' because within the family space, women's gender roles were undisputed, solidified and reinforced as preservers of national identity and cultural values (Duffy, 2000).

Einhorn (1993) observes that after the collapse of the socialist regimes, women in East and Central Europe lost economic, social welfare, and reproductive rights. Nevertheless, a new 'cult for motherhood' emerged in post-socialist societies, who saw all the ills of state socialism in undermining the family and women's role in it. For example, there was a great public concern and panic over the 'death of the sacred Bulgarian family', in relation to the biggest demographic crisis since the turn of the century (Merdjanska and Panova, 1995). Many people feared that the average Turkish and Roma families are threatening the existence of the Bulgarian nation (the birth rate within the Turkish and Roma communities has always been about five times greater than the Bulgarian birth rate) (Dimitrov, 1993). At the same time, other factors such as increased emigration levels (mainly of young, educated people between twenty and thirty-five years old) and a growing sense of individualism (i.e. rejection of old family patterns in favour of 'new-found freedom' of living without getting married) contributed to the overall deconstruction of the traditional nuclear family model in the following years. For the first time the patriarchal values within family relations were challenged by the deterioration of the male-breadwinner model that was already widely noted in Western democratic societies.

Additionally, the idealisation of motherhood, and women's role in the home, that were perpetuated by the state during socialism, and women's own internalisation of traditional gender roles, resulted in the idea that the private and family spheres are more relevant for the formation of gender identities than the public or political spheres (Einhorn, 1993; Galligan *et al.*, 2007). The 'forced emancipation' of women through employment under socialism was replaced by the 'forced domestication' in the new liberal democratic and free market order

(Duffy, 1997:231). Nevertheless, since the changes, the desire of Bulgarians for a better standard of living was reinforced, through a comparison with Western standards of living, which led many people to delay motherhood and family in favour of employment (Merdjanska and Panova, 1995). Recent data from the Republic of Bulgaria National Statistical Institute (2016) show that the mean age of women in fertile age (15 - 49 completed years) at first birth increased from 26.9 in 2015 to 27.0 years in 2016. Mean age of women at first birth vary from 29.8 in district Sofia (capital) to 23.4 in district Sliven (a district in eastern Bulgaria). In comparison, in (2013), a majority (51.2%) of women in the European Union (EU) gave birth to their first child when aged in their 20s, while 40.6% became mothers in their 30s. On average, women in the EU were 28.7 years old when they became mothers for the first time (Eurostat, 2015). It can be deduced from this data, that it is characteristic of Generation Y, Bulgarian women to delay motherhood for later stages of the life course.

c) Gender and democracy in CEE and equality issues in Bulgaria

The process of accession to the European Union presented new opportunities for all women in post-socialist societies in terms of transformation of gender norms through adoption of policies for equality and a gendered perspective in politics and practice. In 2007, Bulgaria passed the body of European law, *the acquis communautaire*, into national legislation that represented a promising beginning towards a more progressive, gender equal society. The main progress in this direction was the adoption of *the Law on Protection against Discrimination*, *the Laws against Trafficking in Human Beings* and the *Bill on Protection against Domestic Violence*. The institutional mechanisms provided by this legislation, however, have not been established so far and gender equality machinery is at the beginning of its development (Daskalova, 2005). Therefore, gender issues are still far from thorough integration into the wider political field.

It should be noted here, that the very concept of gender equality is contextually bound. In other words, dominant gender discourses and ideologies underpin the organization of family and work in each country (Tang and Cousins, 2005). Here, the concept of the gender culture is seen as a useful way to examine differences in social understandings of what men and women do and expect, and how this affects childcare, parenting, work and leisure (Duncan, 1995; Duncan and Pfau-Effinger, 2000). According to Tang and Cousins (2005) there is a clear East–West divide, in terms of work-leisure balance, social policies and gender cultures, which have led to considerable differences in the integration of work, leisure and family life based on the differences in the political systems. For instance, in Western Europe, and in other Western liberal democracies, the debate about gender equality and its conceptualisation, revolved around ending social marginalisation, exclusion and implementation of anti-discrimination policies on every societal level. The main aim of the Western democracies was social mobilisation and political pressure by ‘oppressed’ groups in society. In contrast, in the East, in the aftermath of the transition, gender roles, family relationships, gender-equal opportunities in political, economic and social life are issues that remained marginal to the concerns of post-socialist governments (Galligan *et al.*, 2007), mostly because the major reorientation of public-private and state-society relations. The main differences are seen in terms of how different gender cultures and social policies may affect work and leisure habits and division of domestic labour.

1.1.2 Generation Y Sofian Women, Work and Leisure

The concept of ‘generation’ and ‘generation gap’ are derived from generational theory (Mannheim, 1952, 1970). There is no ‘true’ version of generational theory (Pendergast, 2010); rather there are competing versions that are credible and legitimate for theorising using this framework. In this thesis, the work of Mannheim (1952), Howe and Strauss (2000) and Huntley (2006) are used in order to understand and categorise a cohort of women according to their membership of a generation, which is objectively assigned according to

the year of birth. It is a broader socio-cultural, theoretical framework that employs a wider structural approach, rather than focus on the individual (Pendergast, 2010). Hence, it features patterns and propensities across generational groups. According to Pendergast (2010), generational units are informally defined by demographers, by the media and press, by marketing researchers or by members of the generation themselves. One challenge of adopting the generational framework is the lack of consensus on the exact calendar years constituting each generation (Pendergast, 2010). The boundaries adopted in this thesis pertain to the aftermath of the 1989 socio-political changes across CCE. The term Generation Y (also Millennials) is utilised to refer to the specific generation born between 1980's and early 1990's and was the term given to the generation proceeding Generation X (birth dates from 1965-1980) (Generation Y.com, 2015). According to Manheim (1970:168):

...belonging to the same generations or age group,... endows the individuals sharing in [it] with a common location in the social and historical process, and thereby limits them to a specific range of potential experiences, predisposing them for a certain characteristic mode of thought and experience, and a characteristic type of historically relevant action.

The basic principle is that a cohort sharing a generational location (i.e. the chronological span of time for the birth years of a cohort of individuals) also shares a set of experiences during their formative years, including a particular set of social and economic conditions (Pendergast, 2010). In this research inquiry, generational theory is used in order to contribute to the foundational understanding of Generation Y, Sofian women in full-time employment and their daily negotiation of work and leisure in a post-socialist/post-transitional Bulgarian society.

After the transition, the authoritarian paternalism of the socialist state that had structured practically every aspect of young people's lives from leisure time to cultural consumption gave place to freedom of choice. At present, GenerationY women, in the CEE region can construct their identities in an expanding world of options as much as their Western peers (Barsi, 2015). The two groups are remarkably similar regarding their leisure time activities, with mobility being the centre of their lives, and in their vision of an uncertain future. The

milestones of transition into adulthood that characterized the previous generation's life (getting a job, buying a home, getting married, having children) turned upside down for many. Instead of following a standard path, Generation Y women now create their own version of adulthood in the East, and in the West likewise (Barsi, 2015). Still, women's mentality in the CEE region is shaped by the legacy of socialism and the transition from command economies into capitalist societies, the period in which they grew up. It is argued that Millennials in post-Soviet countries are characterized by individualism and a great need for self-realisation, while craving for conservatism and conformity – a constellation of values that analysts consider a reaction to the uncertainties of the transition period (Barsi, 2015).

1.2 Rationale for the Research Study

The section introduces the rationale for conducting research in terms of identifying the gap in the literature and its contribution to understanding women's work and leisure meanings. This case study aims to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in several domains of feminist leisure science and the interdisciplinary debate about the leisure and work meanings.

Firstly, this research contributes to the interdisciplinary arenas of women studies (Carter and Ritchie, 1990) and feminist leisure research. In particular, a gap exists in the understanding of women's leisure meanings in the postmodern, globalised world (Massey, 1994; Henderson and Hickerson, 2007), where social, economic and structural factors influence gender relations, leisure and work. Previous studies carried out by socialist and liberal feminist (Deem, 1986, Henderson and Bialeschki, 1991, 1993; Green *et al.*, 1990) in the UK and US in the 1980s and 1990s clearly demonstrated that woman's leisure is fundamentally different from men's. Numerous constraints to women's leisure have been identified and the orthodox conceptualisation of leisure has been challenged (Moorst, 2007). Nevertheless, leisure and work meanings are still to be fully understood (Henderson, 2013). That is why the purpose of this inquiry is to probe into Sofian woman and their work and leisure

meanings vis-a-vis the specific dominant gender ideologies reviewed and contribute to broadening the understanding of leisure meanings.

Secondly, this research inquiry responds to calls from researchers in leisure studies to focus on understanding women's leisure and work meanings from a non-western country (Henderson and Gibson, 2013), thus contributing to the expanding cultural perspective and the international perspective, in particular. In recent years, a growing focus on gender and leisure from non-Western countries has indeed emerged but it has also become clear that although some conceptual framework and models might be helpful for explaining some social aspects of leisure, a *one size fits all* approach will not be useful in explaining the complexities of a non-Western socio-cultural environments (Henderson and Gibson, 2013). Consequently, understanding Millennial Sofian women's leisure will help rethink the the specific cultural meanings of work and leisure in a post-modern, post-socialist context.

Thirdly, a review of the literature suggests that research on women and leisure continues to expand in both content and epistemology. In the last decade there has been a shift towards post-structuralist, postmodern and third wave feminist approaches to research in order to move beyond the ascertaining of a single meaning of women's leisure (Henderson and Hickerson, 2007; Henderson and Gibson, 2013). This shift was needed to help address the complexities of working women's leisure in relation to the multiple identities, the reflexive self and the division between the concepts of benefits and constraints and resistance and empowerment (Henderson and Shaw, 2006; Fullagar, 2008). For this type of analysis, some feminist leisure researchers favoured qualitative approaches over quantitative ones (Henderson and Gibson, 2013) and advocated feminist frameworks and reflexivity to help the analysis and interpretation of the findings (Henderson *et al.*, 1996; Henderson and Hickerson, 2007). Therefore, in order to expand on the understanding of leisure meanings for full-time employed women in Sofia, this study applies an autoethnographic approach to adhere to the feminist epistemological considerations and methodology.

1.3 Study Problem and Sub-problems

This is an exploratory feminist case study that aims to broaden understanding about the meanings women attach to their work and leisure and propose aspects for further investigation of the related problematics. The study problem is based on the premise that women's leisure cannot be investigated separately from work and the socio-cultural factors that influence everyday life in any cultural context, as work and leisure are multidimensional constructs that depend on each other for their definitions. That is why the study problem is presented as follows:

The purpose of this research study is to understand the leisure meanings of Generation Y, full-time employed women in Sofia, in relation to the dominant gender ideologies and/or gender discourses which occur across the broader Bulgarian society.

The research study is set in the capital city of Bulgaria – Sofia – which is the researcher's home city. (Refer to Appendix 1, for geographical location of Sofia). Consequently, Sofia was selected in order to allow the investigator to engage in deeply reflexive thought about her own subjectivities and personal biases as being 'of the culture' allows her a partial insider's perspective into dominated gender roles and relations across the broader Bulgarian society.

The study problem is manifested in the following three sub-problems:

Sub-problem 1: Meanings of leisure for Sofian women in full-time employment

The first sub-problem is designed to expand on the selected women's conceptualisations of leisure within the work–leisure relationship. This sub-problem aims to identify the core dimensions that define the phenomenon according to women themselves:

To explore Sofian women's conceptualisations of leisure in order to capture the key characteristics of leisure for them.

Sub-problem 2: Meanings of work for Sofian women in full-time employment

The second sub-problem is designed to probe into the subjective roles and values of work and its benefits for women. It is the next step to understanding the work–leisure relationship in Sofian women’s everyday lives:

To investigate Sofian women’s conceptualisation of work in order to capture the juxtaposition of work and leisure for them.

The aim of the second sub-problem is to investigate Sofian women’s subjective values of paid work in relation to the individual life situation and the dominant gender roles.

Sub-problem 3: perception of gender roles and related problematics

The final sub-problem places the emphasis on exploring the gender ideologies and discourses of femininity and masculinity that conceivably shape Sofian women’s everyday experiences and influence their perceptions and constructions of meanings of leisure. It examines women’s perceptions of these ideologies within the work–leisure dichotomy and allows them to express their views/opinions on their role in their lives:

To uncover women’s perceptions of gendered discourses/ideologies in relation to work and leisure

The final sub-problem is designed to probe into women’s perceptions of the effects of these gender roles and relations in their everyday lives.

By addressing each sub-problem, the researcher seeks to provide up-to-date knowledge about Sofian women’s leisure and work meanings and related contemporary ‘oppressive’ aspects that conceivably constrain these women’s lives. In the wider context, it seeks to ‘give voice’ to the participants, and advance the understandings of women’s personal empowerment.

1.4 Methodological Considerations

This feminist case study utilises qualitative methods to investigate the leisure and work meanings of Generation Y, Sofian women in full-time employment. The main purpose of the study is to understand women's conceptualisations of leisure in relation to paid work and the dominant gender ideologies that occur across the broader post-transitional Bulgarian society. The methodological approach chosen to address the study problem is 'feminist methodology' (Cook and Fonow, 1986; Harding, 1987; Fonow and Cook, 1991; Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002; Fonow and Cook, 2005). This approach includes a combination of methods used to reflect the feminist epistemological dilemmas and the specifics of the research problem and sub-problems, which are examined in detail in Chapter 3 Research Methodology. This study is also inherently interpretivist as it adopts the view that there are multiple social constructions of the social reality and the researcher's task is to understand the multiple social constructions of meanings and knowledge (Burr, 2015). Both researcher and researched co-create the 'reality' and 'knowledge'.

The methodological approach is further demonstrated by the researcher's use of the principles of *bricoleurship* and *crystallisation* (instead of triangulation) within the process of the investigation. The specific qualitative methods used to carry out the empirical investigation are semi-structured interviews, casual conversations and the researcher's autoethnography. The subsequent analysis implements a thematic coding analysis of data, in accordance with both the emerging themes and the theoretical framework guiding the study. The researcher's personal narrative is included to expose the researcher's subjective values and biases and to reveal the complexity and problematics of the feminist researcher personal and social self-identification and its implications for the feminist research process. Finally, Appendix 2 contains the assumptions made by the researcher in relation to this study.

1.5 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis consists of eight chapters. In this section, an outline of each chapter is given:

- **Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study**

The introductory chapter of the inquiry provides information on the scope, focus and historical background of the research. It serves to position the inquiry within the contemporary gender and leisure issues and considers related debates about the complex local and global forces that reshaped the Bulgarian society after the collapse of socialism in CEE. This chapter also features a summary of the methodological approach of this study and some of the key terms utilised.

- **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

Chapter two presents an overview of the evolution of feminist leisure literature that combines cultural, epistemological and methodological perspectives. The chapter presents a linear chronological review of the main theoretical approaches to the work–leisure relationship and the conceptual framework used to ground the study within the existing body of knowledge. It focuses on women’s constraints to leisure, leisure as constraining and leisure as resistance, as well as the key contemporary issues of intersectionality and postfeminism that foreground this investigating.

- **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

Chapter three focuses on the methodological and epistemological issues related to conducting this feminist research case study. In this chapter, a detailed account of the chosen ‘feminist methodology’ is presented including research design, data collection methods, data analysis procedure, ethical considerations and dilemmas. The ways to adhere to the trustworthiness criteria of qualitative research are discussed as well.

- **Chapter 4: Conduct of Fieldwork**

This part of the thesis examines the research process by presenting a detailed account of the two phases of empirical fieldwork: Phase 1, Conduct of pilot study and Phase 2, Conduct of main study. This chapter describes the research setting, the profile of the participants and their prior relationship with the investigator. Additionally, it reviews the findings from the pilot study and the changes made to the main study fieldwork approach. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical considerations and related matters of validity and reliability.

- **Chapter 5: Researcher's Reflexivity and Authoethnographic Accounts**

Chapter 5 considers the researcher's background and her personal self-identification in relation to the socio-cultural environment and its influence over the research topic and the whole process of investigation. This chapter is dedicated to the ambiguous and changing insider/outsider position of the investigator and the related implications for the conduct of the study. The chapter features researcher's the personal narrative pre, during and post fieldwork.

- **Chapter 6: Presentation of Immediate Findings**

This part of the research project introduces the multiple meanings of leisure and work for the interviewed, Generation Y, Sofian women and their views on gender culture. It presents the perceived values/entitlement of leisure and its perceived benefits. It exhibits the perceived opportunities for leisure and some of the constraints to leisure as well. This chapter considers the meanings of paid work and the some of the perceived outcome for women. It concludes with women's perceptions and views on gender roles and relations that affect women within society.

- **Chapter 7: Analysis and Discussion of Findings**

The discussion chapter summarises the main findings of the ways the study participants negotiate gendered freedoms and constraints in a post-feminist, post-transitional, Bulgarian

context. It revisits the study problem and sub-problems and examines the specific contributions this study makes to knowledge. Finally, the limitations of this study are elaborated in relation to the revised study problem and sub-problems.

- **Chapter 8: Conclusions and Direction for further research**

The final chapter summarises the extent to which the study problem and sub-problems have been addressed and critically evaluates the overall conduct of the study. In conclusion, some suggestions for further investigation of women's leisure and work meanings are made and potential areas for further investigation are identified.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to the Organisation and Scope of the Literature Review

In the previous chapter, the historical background of the origins of the gender relations was discussed and some of the roles affecting women's lives were presented to position the study problem within the socio-cultural context. This chapter reviews the feminist gender and leisure literature on which the current investigation is theoretically and conceptually based. It presents the theoretical underpinnings and conceptual frameworks used to facilitate the analysis of women's leisure and paid work meanings vis-à-vis the gender ideologies.

Section 2.2 reviews the feminist critique that rejects the orthodox, male-oriented theorising of leisure conceptualisation (Henderson, 1996). It features the key theories and concepts that inform the understanding of women's leisure and examines a framework for analysing the meanings of leisure for women in relation to work. Sub-section 2.2.1 shows the progression of feminist leisure research and the theoretical perspectives (structural and/or personal) on women's leisure constraints and examines the shift from a single to multiple meanings of leisure. Sections 2.3 to 2.5 centre upon leisure constraints, the notion of leisure as constraining and reviews the approaches to leisure as resistance and empowerment. Finally, the last section 2.6 reviews the continuities and complexities of contemporary feminist leisure research that positions the analysis of leisure within debates about intersectional power relations.

2.2 Feminist Approach to the Work–Leisure Relationship

Research about women, work and leisure has grown considerably over the past 30 years (Henderson and Gibson, 2013). This section describes the evolutionary stages of feminist research within leisure studies and the work-leisure dichotomy. It follows Henderson's four integrative reviews of the literature on women and leisure, from 1980 until 2010. The first review covered the period 1980–1989 (Henderson, 1990). The second presented research published from 1990 to 1995 (Henderson, 1996). The third review featured articles published

from 1996 to 2000 (Henderson *et al.*, 2002) and the final review – a collaboration with Gibson (Henderson and Gibson, 2013) included articles from 2006 to 2010.

According to Lewis (2003:343) 'paid work is increasingly dominating people's lives'. Moreover, work has become the dominant way of identification within the contemporary context (Lewis, 2003), as the increasing influence of globalisation and the 24-hour market means many people are now working longer and more intensively than ever (Lewis, 2003). As leisure is dependent on work for its time and justification (Haywood and Bramham, 1989), this study also relies on theories that conceptualise paid work in relation to leisure. The earliest theories about leisure, however, feature an androcentric bias that prevailed in the leisure scholarship until the feminist criticism of scholars like Deem (1986, 1988) and Green *et al.* (1988) emerged, claiming that there is a gender leisure gap unnoticed by previous conceptualisations. Dumazedier's (1967) definition of leisure is an exception. He is one of the first and few scholars to recognise the need to consider the role of housework and caregiving responsibilities and their link to women's personal time and family leisure. However, his view of paid and unpaid work has been criticised (along with other similar definitions), for its disregard of work's demographic, situational and other personal life-cycle characteristics (Hilbrecht, 2007). Clearly, work does not include only paid employment but can be conceptualised as looking for work, caregiving, studying and performing household duties (Hilbrecht, 2007).

Feminist authors such as Germaine Greer are among the first critics of the patriarchal relations in paid work, gender and empowerment that resonated with working women globally. Greer (1970) along with Anderson and Ward (1975) and Green *et al.* (1988) criticised the inappropriateness of the androcentric definitions of work and leisure that did not consider the complexities of women's caring roles (Deem, 1986; Wimbush, 1986). Previous research on leisure and women in employment has discovered the gendered inequality that surfaced in relation to women's unpaid labour (Kay, 1998). This type of research mainly

focused on dual-career families and working couples in the 1970s and 1980s and the ways working couples deal with stress and employ various strategies to overcome the challenges of the dual-earner lifestyle (Rapoport and Rapoport, 1978; Skinner, 1980). Recent research had expanded on the gendered differences in paid work and unpaid work (e.g., Becker and Moen, 1999; Bird and Fremont, 1991; Sayer, 2005) and suggests that demographic, economic and normative shifts affected time pattern allocation for men and women compared to 40 years ago. Still, studies show that 'men spend more time in paid work and leisure compared with women, whereas women spend more time in housework and childcare' (Wallace and Young, 2010).

The purpose of this research inquiry is to explore the present day situation of millennial Sofian women in full-time employment and thereby allow them to voice their own perceptions of these ideologies in relation to their individual circumstances. The current study answers calls from feminist researchers (Henderson, 2013; Aitchison, 2003; Roberts, 2010) to continue the exploration of women's leisure meanings in order to expand the cultural perspective of leisure, which has become central in contemporary leisure scholarship (Henderson 1990, 1991; Aitchison, 2003; Roberts 2010; Henderson 2013). Consequently, it is imperative to review earlier stages and phases of the western leisure scholarship not only because they suggest a baseline for further research on gender, women and leisure, but because they describe the evolution of methods, methodologies and epistemologies upon which knowledge and understanding are created (Henderson, 1994). In summary, it can be argued that the issues of women's paid work (economic power) conceptualisations are closely related to the gender power relations within society and the debate about women's leisure. This study thereby focuses upon conceptualising individual's leisure and paid work in order to shine light into the ways women's perceptions of gender roles contribute to meaning creation.

2.2.1. The relevance of the structuralist perspective to women's leisure

In the 1970s and the 1980s, the majority of feminist scholars became preoccupied with analysing the traditional modes of separation between work and leisure and the relationship between the patriarchal and economic determinants that constrain women's leisure (Deem, 1986; Green *et al.*, 1988). This period was altogether characterised by the absence of women from leisure scholarship and the universal assumption that leisure is all the same for both genders (Anderson and Ward, 1975; Deem, 1982, 1986, 1988; Tetreault, 1985; Green *et al.*, 1988). However, gender issues became central to the study of leisure as the complexities of women's roles became more visible through empirical research, mainly in the UK and North America (Deem, 1986; Wimbush, 1986) as already pointed out in the background of the study. The Green *et al.*, (1988) study, also known as the Sheffield study, is the first to provide empirical and theoretical insight into the impact of gender on leisure experience. This study is critical to the development of the feminist perspective of leisure because it considers the interconnectedness of demographic, socio-economic and cultural factors, which influence opportunities for leisure and shape how women perceive it (Green *et al.*, 1988). Consequently, leisure scholars began to argue that qualitative methodology is vital for understanding issues of women's leisure and that feminist qualitative techniques should be used in the future to address these problems (Green *et al.*, 1988). The Sheffield study is the first UK study to highlight the impact of gender on leisure (Green *et al.*, 1988). The qualitative study found that women have less time for leisure than men because of household and parental responsibilities, which were primarily a women's job, regardless of what type of paid work they did. Outside of the home, women engaged in leisure less frequently than men and their practice lacked variety. The authors concluded that: 'leisure cannot be adequately researched without taking into account the principal social divisions of gender, class, race, and age group, because it is clearly structured by them' (Green *et al.*, 1988:9). From the study's findings, it became clear that in terms of gender, inequalities exist in terms of access to resources, free time and money, and leisure engagement is influenced

by masculine and feminine roles. Clearly, women shared a common world of inequality regarding the opportunities of leisure (Glyptis and Chambers, 1982).

In a similar vein, Deem's (1986) research on women and leisure in Milton Keynes provided evidence that although women are generally undervalued and oppressed by gender relations, they are also a diverse group with different needs and in different social circumstances, which have numerous implications for the study of leisure. For instance, the study found that gender can be considered a useful framework for further exploration of the gendered power relations and the impact of socialisation in everyday life, as it became clear that women felt empowered by their leisure choices (Deem, 1986). Both UK studies led to the first critical examination and problematisation of the definitions of leisure and work in relation to the context of women's lives (Deem, 1986, 1988; Green *et al.*, 1988). These studies are critical for the further exploration of women's leisure because they present work as an important dimension of women's lives, which need to be studied further in order to understand the role, meaning and significance of work in women's lives. They paved the way for the next phase in leisure scholarship, which is known as the 'add women and stir' approach (Stanley and Wise, 1983; Wimbush and Talbot, 1988), through which women were finally recognised and the needed to challenge male-dominated knowledge claims within the social sciences, including leisure is accepted.

According to Tetreault's (1985) feminist phase theory, the next phase of research on women and leisure is called 'bifocal scholarship'. It provided valuable information on the differences between male and female leisure and provided a starting point for the inadequacy of the 'one size fits all' methodology (Henderson, 1994). However, this type of research is considered only the starting point of understanding women's leisure. The next phase is known as 'feminist scholarship'. It is categorised by a distinct focus on women's lives and the modes of women's oppression (Henderson, 1994).

2.2.2 ‘One size doesn’t fit all’: feminist research in the 1990s- the multiple meanings of women’s leisure

At the beginning of the 1990s, a considerable body of knowledge about women’s leisure was constructed (Henderson, 1990a, 1996). The main concern of North American and the other Western scholars has been to disprove the generalisation of the ‘one leisure size fits all’ approach (Henderson, *et al.*, 1996). According to Henderson (1996), although these attempts generated a unified, universal understanding of women’s leisure to an extent (in terms of focusing the researchers’ attention on the socio-psychological meaning of women’s leisure) they have been unable to address the complexities of women’s leisure behaviour. Thus, the quest for understanding shifted from ‘meaning’ to ‘meanings’ (Dustin, 1992; Henderson *et al.*, 1996). This shift propounded new ways of thinking that argued against the universalism of women’s leisure and called for ‘many feminisms’ (Henderson, 1996) by challenging the patriarchal views underlying social sciences. Most importantly, in the 1990s, researchers investigating issues of gender and leisure came to the conclusion that no singular feminist method exists (Henderson and Bialeschki, 1993) and the frameworks for understanding women’s leisure emerged by making gender a central theoretical concept and focus of analysis (Henderson, 1996). Additionally, although other forms of research (research on women and gender-based research) had contributed to the study of women’s leisure, only feminist research aimed at empowering women through leisure and exposing the modes of oppression (Henderson, 1996). For example, Yule (1992) has been explicit in the value of theoretically informed feminist research in developing leisure policies. Henderson (1994b) supports this view by claiming that gender theorising is imperative for understanding not only women’s leisure but men’s leisure too by acknowledging the gender differences. What is more, Deem (1992) suggests that examining gender and leisure had allowed researchers to rethink the theoretical aspects of paid work, unpaid work, family and leisure. Consequently, the present investigation seeks to explore these aspects by utilising feminist theoretical insight and methodology.

By examining gender differences and gender theory, the proposition that 'the difference in leisure patterns between men and women is more contextual than biological' had emerged (Henderson, 1996:143). Research on gender differences, although mainly descriptive, is the first step towards making women's leisure more visible (Henderson, 1990b, 1994b, 1996). For example Hutchinson's (1994) study of women and the elderly users of public parks, revealed great differences in the leisure and recreation patterns of men and women. Women were severely underrepresented in the parks in contrast with men. Malcolm and Mobily (1990) discovered that the social dimension of play is much more important for girls than for boys. These studies have provided some insight on the understanding of gender differences of leisure but failed to explain why these findings matter and why do they exist. That is why this research focused on the meanings of gender-based leisure from a feminist perspective.

Many theorists, in a variety of academic discourse, have used the concept of 'gender'. It is still a topic of debate that has no fixed, universal definition (Henderson, 1996; Wu, 2013). In this study 'gender' is used in the sense used by Lawson (2007:137): 'the social meaning given to biological differences between the sexes' meaning it is utilised, hereby, to help authenticate and account for the differences between the social conditions of men and women in society, which incorporates the social meaning of roles, unequal power and cultural expectations (Henderson, 1994a, 1996). Some scholars like Butler (2002) criticise this definition for its heteronormative dualism, essentialism and biological determinism, by pointing out that there is no 'sex', which is not already cultural and argues that not only are sex and gender social and cultural constructions but there are multiple modes of masculinity and femininity (Barker, 2004). Others, like McKinnon (2007), argue that although the idea of fully annihilating sexual differences by deconstructing gender completely is an attractive one, it would not be wise to do so before equality is accomplished. So, as previously stated, for the purpose of this investigation 'gender' is used to signify the various constructions of gendered leisure (Shaw, 1994) as well as the way men and women experience leisure differently and so their leisure has different meanings (Jackson and Henderson, 1995).

Gender analysis has proved fruitful ground for examining new aspects of the effects of gender on leisure behaviour, which resulted in a body of knowledge about constraints on leisure (Deem, 1992; Shaw, 1994; Jackson and Henderson, 1995; Henderson, 1996). Henderson (1996:145) comments on the state of leisure research in the 1990s: 'research had focused on examining what gender and gender differences mean and how the contextual roles imposed on females and males may influence their leisure'. In the next section, the complexity of leisure constraints is reviewed: including the definitions of leisure; the impact of paid work on women's leisure choices; and leisure as an arena for resistance to social norms (Shaw, 1994). Finally, Henderson (1994) proposed a baseline model of cumulative and interactive factors that collectively create the gendered leisure meanings. She offers the following formula to synthesize the analysis:

$$\textit{Gendered meanings of leisure} = \textit{Value/Entitlement} + \textit{Benefits/Outcomes} + \textit{Containers/Opportunities} + \textit{Negotiated Constraints} + \textit{Life Situation}$$

This formula is relevant to this study because it creates a baseline for gendered meaning creation. The 'gendered meanings formula' proposed by Henderson (1994) is used in this study to symbolize the connections that exist among these factors and the contribution of this research to understanding women's leisure meanings. The aspects of values/entitlement, benefits/outcomes, containers/opportunities, negotiated constraints, and life situations are seen as dimensions for interpreting individual's meanings within a gendered society (Henderson, 1994).

2.3 Constraints on Women's Leisure

According to Shaw (1994), there are three approaches to the analysis of women's leisure constraints, which reflect the differences among women and exemplify why women's leisure cannot fit into one fixed framework of analysis or approach. She suggests that through the incorporation of these approaches into a guiding conceptual framework the diversity of women's leisure experience and its contradictory nature can be accounted for.

Earlier research examined the various structural constraints to leisure and pointed out the most commonly mentioned by both men and women were lack of facilities, economic and temporal constraints or lack of opportunities (Searle and Jackson, 1985; Jackson, 1988). From these studies, it became clear that women are more disadvantaged than men with regards to freedom and time for leisure (Shaw, 1994). For instance, Horna (1989) and Witt and Goodale (1981) explain that women are more constrained with regards to leisure time in comparison to men because of household obligations and family responsibilities. Hochschild's (1989) research on employed women suggested that women experience a 'second shift' and have little time for leisure. Moreover, in Harrington *et al.*, (1992) time was the main 'objective' constraint for women's enjoyment of leisure.

Another barrier that both women and men repeatedly recognised as constraining their leisure is the economic one. However, women's lack of financial resources and lower earning power compared to men has been constraining on their lives in general and on their leisure (Shaw, 1994). The economic constraints affect women in various ways. Single parents, unemployed women, low-income women and women of colour are much more likely to be affected by it than white, middle-class women (Green *et al.*, 1990; Shaw, 1994).

A shortage of recreational and leisure facilities and the lack of opportunities thereafter is another barrier to leisure, that affect both women and men (Searle and Jackson, 1985; Deem, 1986). Searle and Jackson's (1985) research on sport opportunities revealed unequal provision of sport programmes, facilities and funding for women in contrast with men. These constraints have been regarded as 'intervening' constraints that affect women's desire for leisure and participation.

Early leisure constraints research focused on 'objective' constraints (e.g., money, time and facilities) that influenced both men and women. However, feminist leisure research revealed 'subjective' constraints such as the 'ethic of care' and the 'beauty myth', which leads to issues of insecurity and body image, which in turn limits women's leisure enjoyment (Shaw,

1994). Moreover, Green *et al.* (1988) provided evidence that another central constraint is fear of violence and this inhibited women's leisure involvement and choice. Furthermore, recognising the male bias of previous leisure theory and research, Gilligan's (1982) study revealed the socio-psychological factors behind the ideas of the 'ethic of care', which turned out to be a driving force behind many women's decisions about their 'free' time. Unlike previous research on 'objective' leisure constraints (e.g., money, time and facilities), which affected both men and women, the concept of the 'ethic of care' affected primarily women. Gilligan (1982) defines it as an activity of relationship, of seeing and responding to need, by creating a web of personal links through which women define themselves. She suggests that women tend to attend to other's needs first and neglect their own personal leisure needs, which in some cases leads to lack of sense of entitlement to leisure (Henderson and Allen, 1991). Furthermore, Harrington *et al.* (1992) discovered that the 'ethic of care' constraints women's enjoyment of leisure. Various studies have shown that not only do women have less access to personal leisure or time for themselves, but often they feel they do not have the right to leisure (Green *et al.*, 1990; Harrington *et al.*, 1992). Situated within the feminist qualitative perspective, the concept of the 'ethic of care' and women's lack of entitlement to leisure have been explored together, providing a rich understanding of women's leisure (or the lack thereof) in their everyday lives (Green *et al.*, 1990; Henderson and Allen, 1991; Henderson and Bialeschki, 1991). As the concept is also linked to the primary role of women as child bearers and caregivers, it is used to explain how family commitment constrained women's leisure (Shaw, 1992).

Recently, post-structuralist perspective focuses on the issues of women's psychological well-being and supports the view that leisure in everyday life can be considered as part of women's resistance to limiting gender norms and feminine worth, success, and value (Fullagar, 2008; Koca *et al.*, 2009). This aspect is discussed further in section 2.5 Leisure as resistance.

To recap, a considerable number of studies have provided evidence that women's constraints arise from the structured, gender-based power relations within society (Shaw, 1994; Jackson and Henderson, 1995; Jackson, 2005). This approach to leisure is based on the notion that leisure is a positive and anticipated experience or activity (Shaw, 1994) and it is thus argued that the fundamental aspect of happiness is to be involved in different leisure tasks and activities (Lee Duckworth *et al.*, 2005). The leisure constraints framework, however, has been challenged by the assumption that leisure is not always a positive resource for women but can be potentially constraining as well (Shaw, 1994).

2.4 Leisure as Constraining

In this research study, the idea of leisure as constraining is also considered. It assumes that participation in certain kinds of activities influences women's lives, roles and positions in society. According to Shaw (1985) and Eccles *et al.* (1990), research that focuses on this idea suggests (implicitly or explicitly) that leisure is not gender neutral part of life and it is not always positive. Rather the various types of activities to which most men and women engage in, and the nature of some free-time experiences, perpetuate gender stereotypes, reinforce structured power relations within society and maintain gender-based inequality (Shaw, 1994). For instance, Green *et al.*'s (1990) investigation focused not so much on what women do in their leisure time but on the cultural significance of leisure, which evidently has a gender dimension. Green *et al.* (1990) found that women's freedom to leisure is circumscribed by their income level and employment; her family and her lack of status within the patriarchal society. This cultural approach to leisure is advocated by Alcott (1988) and Henderson (1991). It is related to the idea that the traditional views of femininity, masculinity and the family are produced and reproduced by cultural practice including leisure (Shaw, 1994). For instance, cultural studies in the UK have discovered that gender relations and dominant ideologies about femininity and masculinity are reproduced by the mass media. A number of studies have recognised the sexist nature and content of television programmes globally and their effects on individuals and the public (Butler and Paisley, 1980; Downs,

1981; Hess and Grant, 1983). In short, this argument suggests that most forms of mass media involvement (popular music, movies, magazines and newspapers) are leisure activities that can constrain women's leisure in the sense and that they represent stereotypical images of women, restrictive gender roles and affirm sexist systems of beliefs and reduce women's options and choices of leisure (Shaw, 1994).

Furthermore, another way in which leisure can be constraining to women's lives is the 'narrow range and stereotypical nature of the activities society deem to be appropriate for women and girls' (Shaw, 1994:13). For instance, although, in recent years sport opportunities have increased for women and girls, some sports are still deemed inappropriate for women. In general, sports that emphasise physical attractiveness, aesthetics and body shape, like gymnastics or aerobics, are regarded as the conventional sport activities appropriate for young girls and women (Lenskyj, 1986). Although equal opportunities and anti-discrimination laws have been adopted by most western societies, gendered leisure activities are still evident and authors like Lenskyj (1986, 1987) suggest that they reduce women's leisure choices and opportunities for leisure; hence, leisure can be seen as constraining.

Other forms of leisure participation can be considered as reinforcing women's mothering role within the heterosexual family. Green and Hebron's (1988) research in the UK explored the ways in which patriarchal power relations within the family not only reproduce out-dated, conservative ideas about 'family values' but also disguise family leisure as women's personal leisure (Green and Hebron, 1988; Hunter and Whitson, 1992). These findings suggest that even freely chosen leisure activities might still be a result of pressure to conform to sexist ideologies and/or gendered social control processes.

In conclusion, the idea that leisure can be regarded as constraining is problematic because it suggests that certain leisure activities produce gender relations and restrict women's leisure choice (Shaw, 1991a, 1994). Therefore, leisure cannot be theorised simply as a pleasurable

experience with positive effects on life (Shaw 1991a, 1994). This problematic nature of leisure cannot be brought together with the leisure constraints perspective because the former considers leisure only in a positive light. However, the 'leisure as constraining' approach brings new insight into the connections between women's leisure and their position and role in society, which is missing from the central leisure constraints viewpoint (Shaw, 1994). A combination of both presents a contradictory view on women's leisure and namely while women strive to reduce the constraints to leisure and increase their personal freedom of choice and participation, such participation might reproduce gendered power relations that continue to restrict and inhibit their freedom (Shaw, 1994).

2.5 Approaches to Leisure as Resistance

The two approaches presented above both look at the relationship between women's lives and women's leisure in an oppressive and negative terms, as this oppression is represented by women's subordinate position within the patriarchal society (Deem, 1986; Shaw, 1994). In comparison, the leisure as resistance viewpoint assumes that leisure practice, choices, behaviour or settings can challenge oppressive gender roles and structured power relations, making it a form of political practice (Shaw, 2001), which have a potential for enhancement of individual and collective empowerment. According to Shaw (2001), this view of resistance is problematic, because there are three issues related to the conceptualisation of resistance that need to be addressed in future research: firstly, the issue of *collective versus individual resistance*; secondly, *the question of outcomes of resistance* and finally, *the issue of intentionality*. Three theoretical perspectives have been applied so far by researcher in order to conceptualise resistance and explore these matters. In the following section these issues have been addressed as this research brings these perspectives together in order to explore the subjectivities of women's leisure meanings.

Structuralist perspective versus postmodernist and post-structuralist perspective

The idea of leisure as resistance is based on two foundational theoretical concepts: agency (leisure as freely chosen or self-determined) and reproduction (of unequal or uneven gender relations) (Shaw, 1994). It should be noted here that the notion of agency is incorporated to avoid the impression that women are completely powerless (Gregory, 1982). Instead, women (and men) are viewed as social actors who perceive and interpret social situations and make a self-determined decision on how to act accordingly, e.g., the acts of the individuals have culturally determined value (Mead, 1934, 2009; Barker, 2004). The argument about resistance as agency is based on post-structuralist Foucault's (1979) theorising about power and power relations. Structuralist analysis is rejected and instead, power is seen as obtainable by all individuals in their everyday life (Wearing, 1998). The notion of diversity is closely linked to this view: in other words, it rejects the view that women share a common world of inequality and oppression, but favours the idea of the different situations and circumstances of women and their subjective experiences (Wearing, 1998). Thus, resistance is seen as the 'flip side' of the reproduction of the unequal access to power and resources in society (Shaw, 2001: 188).

From a structuralist perspective 'resistance is conceptualised as acts that challenge structured power relations of class, race, disability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or other forms of social stratification' (Shaw, 2001:188). It is 'seen as a struggle against institutionalised power, and resistance or agenic exercise of power by individuals or social groups is seen to be possible under conditions of relative freedom' (Shaw, 1994:15). In favour of the post-structuralist view, though, Wearing (1990) argues that it is the relative freedoms that allow for leisure to be regarded as a site for resistance to traditional gender roles, thus stressing the importance of personal subjectivities. Moreover, this view of resistance being possible through leisure is based on the conceptualisation of leisure as a personal choice and self-determination. This entails that if leisure is indeed an act of consciously chosen activity then it can also be a site for individuals to exercise their personal

power; hence, leisure is also linked to the notion of leisure as empowering (Bialeschki and Michener, 1994). For instance, Fraysinger and Flannery (1992) found that self-determination in leisure challenges traditional, normative roles and produces a stronger sense of self for women. Leisure is thus seen as a way to find independence and create or recreate a stronger sense of self for women. Wearing (1991) investigated the relationship between leisure experience and the construction of gender identity in the different stages of the life cycle and discovered that women's leisure experience is both a site for reinforcing conventional oppressive gender roles but also a site for resisting these same roles. She suggested that leisure can serve to maintain male power and reinforce long-established, traditional feminine characteristics like caring, nurturing, passiveness and gentleness (Henderson, 1996). However, she discovered that women exercise their capacity for agency in leisure and thus create liberated identities (Wearing, 1991).

In contrast, the structuralist approach places the emphasis on the role of ideology. Green *et al.* (1990) uses ideology in the sense of superstructure: representational systems of beliefs, perceptions and representations that people utilise to make sense of the world (Green *et al.*, 1990; Shaw, 2001). Challenging ideologies associated with gender, race, sexuality or the family is then considered as challenges to the power relations that structure them. For example, Bryson's (1987) research indicated the ways in which sport is a site of construction and reconstruction of masculine hegemonies and argues that sport forms of leisure can interiorise women and their activities. However, she also addressed the ways in which women can challenge these hegemonies by participation in sports and through the promotion of alternative sports. More recently, Green's (1998) research on women's friendship explores the importance of the leisure contexts to women's gender identity construction and examines how women's leisure can reflect both traditional feminine ideologies and at the same time lead to resistance to these hegemonies. Some leisure scholars have criticised the structuralist approach to power and ideology (e.g., Rojek, 1995, 1997). However, Shaw (2001) suggested that this criticism (which favours *structure* over

agency) does not seem acceptable, with regards to research on leisure and resistance. Feminist structuralist like Deem (1988) and Scraton (1994) have been more than explicit in their arguments about the importance of dominant power relations and ideologies. They do not reject the power of individual agency; on the contrary, they acknowledge it as the possibility of resistance to these structures (Green, 1998). Again, a strong argument for the importance of agency, however, is made by post-structuralist theorist Wearing (1998), who argues that leisure is linked to the personal development of power and the liberty of self-creation and self-identification through leisure. She puts the emphasis on the individual rather than collective forms of resistance. This study aims to tackle the problem of overemphasizing structure over agency by focusing on individual meanings of leisure and work, but also acknowledges the importance of the socio-cultural context.

Interactionist perspective

Social interactionism is the social psychological analysis of gender and resistance within the leisure field, which emphasises the subjective experiences of leisure in the various social and interactional contexts (Shaw, 2001). Shaw (2001:191) explains: 'Resistance is seen to occur when women adopt behaviours or express themselves through activities which provide personal empowerment and which, at the same time, reflect a challenge to dominant, restrictive or constraining views of femininity, sexuality or motherhood'. For instance, Henderson and Bialeschki's (1991) research on women's sense of entitlement to leisure discovered that some women believe in the right to personal leisure, despite dominant cultural ideologies of femininity and motherhood. Similarly, resistance has been linked to participation in activities that do not conform to traditional gender roles (Shaw, 1999a). For instance, while some sports like aerobics are seen as reproducing gender stereotyping and traditional roles, participation in other sports, like boxing can be regarded as resistance (Shaw, 1999a).

In short, the social Interactionist approach to resistance has links with both the structuralist and the post-structuralist perspective. Its view of the role of ideology is based on the opposing views of traditional verses non-traditional interpretations of femininity, while at the same time regards the individual's sense of autonomy and freedom of self-expression. It implies that leisure is a collective act and has the potential for social change but at the same time acknowledges the subjective experience. In this study, this approach is utilised to study the meanings of leisure to Sofian women, as Wearing (1998) suggests that the two opposing views are not so far apart, theoretically, as definitions might advocate.

2.5.1 Conceptualising Leisure as Resistance

The difficulty in conceptualising resistance comes from the multiple theoretical approaches that has been utilised to study leisure as resistance, as described above (Shaw, 2001). However, in this study the Interactionist perspective seem relevant to the study as it brings women's individual experience to the foreground and a linkage is drawn between women's leisure experiences and their experiences of oppressive ideologies and/or constraints (Parry, 2005). However, the structuralist and post-structuralist perspectives are relevant as well, as this study seeks to explore conceptualisations of both work and leisure. The emerging emphasis on resistance (Henderson and Hickerson, 2007) is included in the broader understanding of meanings of leisure for women that is further developed, in relation to the politics of identity (race/ethnicity, religion, sexuality, class, and disability) and the question of how women are they positioned (structurally and discursively) in terms of these identities (Parry and Fullagar, 2013). For example, Kay's (2006) research described the inequities of gendered leisure in family life in her analysis of Muslim women's opportunities for sport, and Kivel *et al.*, (2009) arguing for the need to retheorise experience to situate individual leisure within the ideological and discursive contexts of racial and gender inequality.

The conceptualisation of empowerment is also used in this study, as Shaw (2001) claims that empowerment is an integral aspect of resistance that is both a positive consequence of

resistance (women are empowered through their agency) and a part of the process of resisting (through the acquisition of skills and vision to resist women are empowered). In other words, leisure is perceived as an empowering tool that has the potential to enhance personal freedom and bring positive social change, i.e., leisure is seen as a form of political practice (Shaw, 2001). There are three important issues to be considered in relation to the idea of leisure as resistance: issues of individual and collective resistance; the outcomes of resistance and the problem of intentionality (Shaw, 2001). The theoretical origin of the construct of resistance is used in this study to uncover how Millennial, Sofian women themselves conceptualise resistance in relation to the local socio-cultural ideologies/discourses. The theoretical frameworks of women's empowerment are discussed below, as resistance is linked to personal empowerment (Wearing, 1999).

2.6 Feminist Leisure Research in the Contemporary Era

So far, this chapter reviewed the gendered nature of leisure constraints and ideologies and focused on understanding leisure in the context of everyday life along with its social structures (Henderson, 1991; Shaw, 1994). The feminist leisure research of the 1980s and 1990s examined the gendered context that shapes both women's and men's experience, relations, and identities and made it clear why it was necessary to study women (Parry and Fullagar, 2013). This section focuses on the more contemporary debates about inequality and marginalisation that moved beyond gender as the single cause of exclusion, discrimination or social restraint. It considers the potential use of intersectionality for engaging more critically with the multiple interconnections of power, identity and social relations. It outlines some its key tenets: as a theoretical perspective, as a methodological approach and as an analytical 'framework' (Watson and Scraton, 2012) that moves away from 'one-size-fits-all' thinking, and instead focuses on relationality and interconnections (Parry and Fullagar, 2013). Here, some possible contribution of intersectionality to the analysis of women's leisure meanings is discussed. Finally, this part of the review considers

how thinking intersectionally is a useful means of analysing leisure as a dynamic interplay of individual expression and the social relations within which leisure occurs.

2.6.1 Intersectionality: some theoretical underpinnings, conceptual complexity and methodological implications

The concept of intersectionality was first coined by Crenshaw (1991) to account for the interrelationships and interconnections between gender, race and class in the context of the law and legal studies in the USA. The concept of intersectionality – ‘the interaction of multiple identities and experiences of exclusion and subordination’ (Davis, 2008: 67), thus, developed around theorising gender and race and owes much to the objection of black feminists against the privileging of specific aspects of identity formation (Brah, 1996; Hill Collins, 1990; hooks, 1989; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Over the past two decades, the concept had become a ‘buzzword’ within social sciences, including feminist studies (Davis, 2008; McCall, 2005; Yuval-Davis, 2006). However, there has been little engagement with intersectionality within leisure scholarship even though the field have a strong tradition in research that explores inequalities including class (Clarke & Critcher, 1985), gender (Deem, 1986; Green, Hebron, & Woodward, 1990) and race (Hylton, 2005). The ‘postmodern turn’ has resulted in a shift of focus from material inequalities to issues of difference and identities that suggest that inequality may be experienced in increasingly complex ways. This research study considers the potential use of intersectionality for engaging more critically with the multiple interconnections of power, identity, freedom, choice and constraint. The key theoretical aspects are discussed by Watson and Scraton (2013) below:

- As a theoretical framework, it provides a more critically informed discussions of difference (Watson and Scraton, 2013), because it brings together different social factors (not just gender) in the context of postmodern difference without abandoning material relations of power (Davis 2008).

- Intersectionality focuses upon specific contexts and the political, social and material consequences of gender, race, class, disability, sexuality and ageing, and moves to deconstruct these categories and universalisms to more fully explain contradictory, dynamic manifestations of power (Watson and Scraton, 2013).
- Yuval-Davies (2006) argues for the need to understand different levels of intersectionality: organisational/institutional, intersubjective, experiential and representational
- Glenn (1999) proposes an integrative framework that includes representation, micro-interaction and the historical context or conditions in which inequalities take place to help the analysis.

The theoretical debates about understanding and accounting for multiple disadvantages that move beyond static concepts of identity and inequality continue among scholars from various disciplines (Watson and Scraton, 2013). Other questions include how to 'do' intersectionality and what does this mean for the methodologies we develop in empirical research (Watson and Scraton, 2013)? These are discussed in the following sections.

According to Flintoff *et al.* (2008, p. 81) engaging with intersectionality in leisure research is complex and challenging both conceptually and methodologically. There are a number of methodological approaches developed in order to help operationalise understandings of the complex intersections of inequality. A major approach to researching across difference has been one that focuses on the qualitative lived experience of individuals. According to McCall (2005:1773 /1774), there are three approaches, defined in terms of their stance toward categories, that is, how they understand and use analytical categories to explore the complexity of intersectionality in social life:

- *anticategorical complexity* – 'Social life is considered too irreducibly complex—overflowing with multiple and fluid determinations of both subjects and structures—to

make fixed categories anything but simplifying social fictions that produce inequalities in the process of producing differences.'

- *intracategorical complexity* – this approach 'falls conceptually in the middle of the continuum between the first approach, which rejects categories, and the third approach, which uses them strategically. Like the first approach, it interrogates the boundary-making and boundary-defining process itself. Like the third approach, it acknowledges the stable and even durable relationships that social categories represent at any given point in time, though it also maintains a critical stance toward categories'. This perspective focuses on multiple categories as opposed to rejecting them outright and is associated with, for example, black and standpoint feminists and struggles for a politics of recognition that incorporate multiple aspects of identity (McCall (2005).
- *intercategorical complexity* – 'scholars provisionally adopt existing analytical categories to document relationships of inequality among social groups and changing configurations of inequality along multiple and conflicting dimensions'. This perspective requires multi-level data that capture both the agency of individuals and the structures and processes that can both enable and constrain (Watson and Scraton, 2013).

In summation, McCall (2005) argues that, firstly, not all research on intersectionality can be classified into one of the three approaches. Secondly, some research may, belong partly to one approach and partly to another. Thirdly, all three approaches can be considered broadly representative of current approaches to the study of intersectionality and together illustrate a central element of the argument that different methodologies produce different kinds of substantive knowledge and that a wider range of methodologies is needed to fully engage with the set of issues and topics falling broadly under the intersectionality construct. Additionally, as theoretical and methodological debates continue within the social sciences (Davis, 2008) controversies have emerged about whether intersectionality should be

conceptualized as a crossroad (Crenshaw, 1991), as 'axes' of difference (Yuval-Davis, 2006) or as a dynamic process (Staunæs, 2003). It is still unclear whether intersectionality should be limited to understanding individual experiences, to theorizing identity, or whether it should be taken as a property of social structures and cultural discourses. In this study, the concept is used to help facilitate the better understanding of how Sofian women conceptualise the multiplicity of their leisure meanings in relation to the intersectional power relations. However, the broader philosophical debated of conceptualising the construct go beyond the scope of this investigation. Here, it would be more helpful to regard intersectionality as a process of ongoing development rather than as a set of conditions that needs to be met (McCall, 2005). The next section looks at the practicality of intersectional thinking within leisure contexts.

2.6.1 Thinking intersectionally, Leisure and Embodiment

Leisure could contribute to debates on intersectionality as (active) bodies represent unique sites and situations where the complexity of identity is played out (Watson and Scraton, 2013). Fixmer and Wood (2005: 237-238) emphasise the embodied politics of contemporary feminism, 'which is personal and often physical, bodily action that aims to provoke change by exercising and resisting power in everyday life'. According to Parry and Fullagar, (2013) leisure is an important site of embodiment through which women's identities are shaped by power relations that regulate freedom and opportunities for change. Feminist debates now challenge the way we think about gendered leisure practices and spaces in the contemporary era, questioning the utility of the concept of leisure as the early feminists did when they critiqued the work-leisure dualism that ignored the complexity of women's embodied lives (Parry and Fullagar, 2013). Embodiment is, thus, most usefully regarded as social process in action (Watson and Scraton, 2013). In other words, in order to more fully appreciate the ways in which space for leisure is negotiated or agency is conceptualised and achieved, researchers need to assess processes of embodiment taken up in relation to

leisure. For example, Villa (2011, p. 181) states, 'Embodiment is per se intersectional in its form' and identity that are experienced 'on' and through the body. Gender identities are performed and embodied through multiple leisure sites, practices and/or experiences that reveal the micropolitics of gendered lives—playing sport, performing in bars, creating gardens, planning holidays, and sharing the couch to watch television. Leisure is also understood 'relationally,' as shaped by gendered norms about caring for others (in families and friendships), caring about one's embodied self and care expressed through connections with nonhuman otherness (plants, animals, places) (Parry and Fullagar, 2013). For instance, Watson and Ratna (2011) argue that a conceptualization of space for leisure can be effectively utilized to acknowledge how leisure spaces are constructed across racialised, classed and gendered social relations in their research on public parks in relation to an event championing South Asian popular cultural activities. Here, leisure spaces are defined as outcomes and constituents of complex historical processes. Thinking intersectionally enabled the inquirer to critically engage with difference, explore the lived experiences of difference and consider some of the consequences of difference through dynamic social processes (Watson and Scraton, 2013). Thus, leisure is also conceptualized as a site through which the politics of gender identity is negotiated in relation to constructions of 'difference' and 'normality via identity categories of race, sexuality, disability, age, etc. (Parry and Fullagar, 2013).

2.7 Summary of the Chapter: Literature review

This chapter has reviewed the foundational conceptualisations of women's leisure that contribute to the understanding of, Generation Y, Sofian women's leisure and work meanings. The relevance of the feminist approach to the work–leisure relationship was examined to focus the attention towards the complexity and increasing problematics of contemporary women's leisure. It is suggested that women's leisure is considerably more constrained than men's, because of women's domestic and childbearing responsibilities. Even so, feminist leisure research suggests that women's leisure has the potential for

resistance to the hegemonic socio-cultural ideologies and women's conceptualisation of leisure may be seen as forms of resistance and/or empowerment. This discussion is carried further by the feminist debates about gendered leisure practices and spaces in the contemporary era—moving to critically question the utility of the concept of leisure as the early feminists did when they analysed the work-leisure dualism that ignored the complexity of women's gendered realities. Thus, information on the individual meanings women attach to their leisure and work, can contribute to the broader understanding of women's leisure that comes from a non-western cultural setting. In the next chapter, the methodological framework of this research study is presented.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction to the Methodological Basis of this Study

This chapter outlines the methodological approach used to investigate Sofian women's leisure and its meaning vis-à-vis the dominant gender ideologies which occur across the broader Bulgarian society. The chapter begins with an overview of the ontological and epistemological basis underpinning the feminist perspective chosen as a paradigmatic foundation of this investigation. As there is no one single feminist epistemology or methodology (Hesse-Biber, 2014), this chapter provides a detailed account of and justification for the chosen standpoint. Furthermore, it describes the case study design, method selection and development, and sampling technique used in this inquiry. Here, the researcher accounts for the appropriateness of the reflexive and self-reflective, autoethnographic feminist approach, which is revealed in the interpretive, qualitative methodology adapted. Finally, the ethical considerations are examined and the trustworthiness of this research discussed.

3.2 Research Philosophy: The feminist perspective and its methodological assumptions

This research project explores matters of subjective meanings and significance of work and leisure for individual women in full-time employment. This endeavour entails an adoption of a particular feminist viewpoint that challenges the hierarchical models of knowledge creation and one universal 'truth' (Hesse-Bieber and Yaiser, 2004) in favour of an approach that allows a more complex consideration of the personal, social and political realms of experience (Lafrance, 2011). Therefore, the researcher adopts a number of assumptions about:

- The nature of reality
- The nature and creation of knowledge
- the position and authority of the researcher throughout the research process
- the purpose and value of research itself

that stream from feminist discourse. In sections 3.2.1, 3.2.2 and 3.2.3, these assumptions are discussed in detail, as all of these aspects have a profound effect on the overall processes of the research.

3.2.1 Epistemological stance of the research study

It is now widely recognised by feminist scholars that feminist research implements a distinctive approach to inquiry (Cook and Fonow, 1986; Harding, 1987; Reinharz and Davidman, 1992; Crasnow, 2008), meaning feminist practice and theory are assumed to espouse epistemological and methodological implications for the conduct of study (Cook and Fonow 1986; Harding 1987; Reinharz and Davidman 1992; Crasnow 2008). Thus, feminist epistemology is commonly understood as the feminine 'ways of knowing' or 'who can know' questions about the nature of 'reality' and social relations; the position, role and authority of the researcher and the goals of research (Harding, 1987; Anderson, 1995; Lang, 2011). Stanley and Wise (1993:189) argue that 'epistemology is *fundamental* for feminism, for it is around the constitution of feminist epistemology that feminists can most directly and far-reachingly challenge non-feminist frameworks and ways of working'.

More than 25 years have passed since Harding (1986, 1991) made a distinction between the main opposing views of feminist philosophy of science into *feminist empiricism*, *feminist standpoint* and *postmodern feminism* (Harding, 1986, 1991). Through the years, these approaches have been revised and criticised numerous times by feminist scholars (Intemann, 2010). Recently, the sharp distinctions between them have become more blurred and more commonalities have appeared between them (Intemann, 2010). In the following sections, I position the research study within this epistemological debate, having in mind its goals: a) to explore Sofian women's leisure and work meanings, thus creating knowledge that is substantiated by women's actual lived experiences and expressed in their own voices and language (Stanley and Wise, 1983, 1993); b) to foster or inspire feminist awareness and challenge the negative assumptions about feminism in a contemporary, postfeminist

Bulgarian culture; c) to evoke a critical view of Sofian women's work–leisure meanings through an autoethnographic personal narrative that exposes researcher's emic/etic; 'insider/outsider' (Collins, 2000) dilemmas; and d) suggest aspects for further investigation of the interconnectedness of work, gender and leisure.

Using reflexive, self-reflexive and autoethnographic narrative the researcher becomes an inseparable part of the process and positions herself in the same critical plane as the researched women. The researcher does this in order to: a) reflect upon the hierarchical distinction between researcher and researched (Oakley, 1981; Harding, 1987; Stanley and Wise, 1990; England, 1994), and b) write herself into the work, purposefully making her identities visible. Anderson and Austin (2012:140) refer to this as 'methodological transparency': the researcher is a participant in the study, accounting for her own experience, bias and personal beliefs through personal narrative and reflexive techniques (Stanley and Wise, 1983; Harding, 1987). This method provides a critical account of the researcher's own subjectivity and deconstruction of authority, thus attempting to overcome issues of:

- *ethics*: issues of power imbalance and vulnerability of both the researcher and the researched within an interview situation (Cotterill, 1992)
- *methodology*: a hierarchical relationship will result in misrepresented and distorted data); and
- *consciousness-raising* (if the purpose of research is to emancipate women, rather than produce valid knowledge claims, then women should be encompassed in the research process) (Miles, 1983; Hammersley, 1995).

In the following sections, all of the above-mentioned epistemological dilemmas are examined, along with a discussion on the philosophical debates about the epistemological basis of this research study, which revolves around four themes, identified by Hammersley (1995), below.

The omni-relevance of gender

A key feature of this project's feminist methodology is the notion of gender and the differences between men and women in all spheres of social life, including leisure (Hawkesworth, 1989). It should be noted here that an on-going discussion about the conceptualisation of 'gender' exists within the social sciences (Barker, 2004; Khan, 2011) but, for the purpose of the investigation the socio-cultural point of view of gender as different from biological sex and socially created is adopted (Henderson, 1994). Hammersley (1995:45) explains:

It is claimed that human social relations of all kind are heavily structured by differences in the social position of both man and women, and most important of all by differences between them in power. From this point of view, gender is a critical issue in all areas of social life and must be taken into account in any analysis.

This claim gives rise to the argument that since gender differences structure personal experience and beliefs, and given the universal male domination in society, social science is 'an expression of the experience of man presented as if it were human experience' (Hammersley, 1995:46). In conjunction with this claim about the androcentricity of science, feminist thinkers such as Westkoff (1979) and Smith (1987) argued that feminist methodology should be concerned with exploring women's experience, investigate the mechanisms and structures of gender relations and differences and thus continually challenge the male biases. This research study adopts the view that gender is an important variable that affects Sofian women's everyday lives and needs to be further studies in relation to leisure and work.

Personal experience verses scientific method

The second feature of this study's methodological framework is the significance and validity of the personal experience in comparison with the traditional, orthodox (masculinist) positivist, scientific methods (Cook and Fonow, 1986; Harding, 1987). According to Stanley and Wise (1993:63):

Feminism insisted that personal experience couldn't be invalidated or rejected, because if something was felt then it was felt, and if it was felt then it was absolutely real for the woman feeling and experiencing it.

That is how feminists reject the traditional division between 'objective' and 'subjective', which insists on getting away from the 'personal' or the particular and adopting a positivist, view of one objective reality, that does not acknowledges women's experience as legitimate. Scholars like Harding (1986a, 1991) criticise the use of the objective scientific method as it fails to recognise the effect of gender in the creation and production of knowledge, and neglects the researcher's embeddedness in the socio-cultural and political context, as examined in the previous section. Thus, this kind of adherence to empiricist method presents masculinist forms of knowledge as knowledge *per se* (Code, 1991). Nevertheless, ever since Harding proclaimed this kind of science simply as 'bad science' (Harding, 1986a, 1991), the advocates of feminist empiricism have defended, modified and strengthened this approach (Longino, 1990; Nelson, 1990; Campbell, 1994; Anderson, 2004) and continue to adhere to the position that sexism and androcentric bias can be eradicated from research through the use of traditional empirical methods, grounded in a realist conception of reality (Campbell, 1994). In contrast, Stanley and Wise (1993:63) raise the argument for what feminists like Freidan (1963) call '*the personal is the political*' or the political commitment of feminist research and explain that:

This argues that power and its use can be examined within personal life and, indeed, in some sense that the political must be examined in this way. It [the personal is the political] also emphasises that 'the system' is experienced *in* everyday life, and isn't separate from it. And so feminism argues that systems and social structures, whether connected to the economy, the family, or the oppression of women more generally, can best be examined and understood through an exploration of relationships and experiences within everyday life.

Ever since the 1960s, this slogan has been an axiom of the feminist movement, its organisation and practices (Stanley and Wise, 1993). However, feminists have expressed dissatisfaction with what they call 'constant replication' of personal experience, which does nothing for the overall revolution (Freeman, 1975). Freeman (1975) claims that something more solid and tangible must be done after the consciousness-raising and argues that

feminism must go beyond the 'personal' in the name of women's liberation. Thus, the main criticism comes from the lack of formal organisation and absence of organised political action (Freeman, 1975). Brunsdon (1978) adds to the same arguments, stating that although the personal is important to the understanding of women's subordinate position, 'remaining within the politics of personal experience will not fundamentally transform this subordination' (Brunsdon, 1978:23). For the purpose of this study, I adopt the view of Stanley and Wise (1993) who answer this criticism by claiming that 'the political' as presented above is conceptualised in a very narrow, dichotomous manner that restricts the feminist agenda. They reject the notion of 'obsolescence' and 'repetitiveness' of the 'personal' by explaining that these ideas cater only to the needs of women who have long been involved and identify with feminism and disregards the novice or 'new recruits', who have been involved for a short period of time. In conclusion, Stanley and Wise (1993:73) claim:

We believe that the daily 'doing' of feminism is what the revolution is, and that there is no other way for social change to occur than through personal change multiplied many times.

The discussion about whether 'the personal is political' is closely linked to the debate about the emancipatory goal of feminist research, which is discussed in the following section.

Additionally, the emphasis on personal experience as unique way of knowing, also advocates the use of qualitative methods for conducting research and a rejection of more structured quantitative ones (Stanley and Wise, 1993; Brooks and Hesse-Biber, 2007). Qualitative methods are advocated because of their potential advantage to destabilize the power relations within the process of research (O'Shaughnessy and Krogman, 2014). This study utilises qualitative methods on the grounds that only through these methods (see section 3.4 Data collection methods) a woman's personal, inner realm and experiences can be accessed, the researcher's embeddedness in the socio-political context can be accounted for and the inherent androcentricity of the positivist methodologies challenged.

Objectivity and neutrality are rejected in favour of more subjective approaches that reflect the position and perspective of the researcher as part of the research.

The relationship between researcher and researched and the place of the 'personal' within research

In this part of the epistemological framework, the researcher accounts for her reasons for adopting a reflexive, autoethnographic stance (Wilson and Hollinshead, 2015) to the creation of knowledge as a feminist researcher.

a) Reflexivity and self-reflexivity

This research study adopts the position that the researcher's own values should be accounted for throughout the research process, and not disregarded, denied or avoided as positivist, objective methodologies suggest (Harding, 1986; Stanley and Wise, 1993; Hesse-Biber, 2014). This means that the researcher's everyday experience of leisure is considered a legitimate source of knowledge, which is presented through the qualitative methods of reflexive and personal narrative (Reinhartz and Davidman, 1992). Hesse-Biber and Leckenby (2004:211) explain the significance of self-reflexivity to feminist research:

Feminist researchers are continually and cyclically interrogating their locations as both researcher and as feminist. They engage the boundaries of their multiple identities and multiple research aims through conscientious reflection. This engagement with their identities and roles impacts the earliest stages of research design. Much of feminist research design is marked by an openness to the shifting contexts and fluid intentions of the research questions.

The researcher adopts the reflexive approach to inquiry in order to address issues of insider/outsider or emic/etic position. Reflexivity is the process of reflecting critically on the self as an investigator, the 'human as an instrument' (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, 1989). The purpose of the reflexive methodology is not only to encourage the researcher to come to terms with the choices of research problem and the people involved in it, but also to acknowledge the influence of the multiple identities that come into play with the research setting (Alcoff and Potter, 1993). It is generally associated with qualitative research (Hertz,

1997; Richardson, 2000; Holliday, 2002) and feminist theory and methodology now include a reference to reflexivity in their definitions (Stanley and Wise, 1990; Wasserfall, 1993; Daley, 2010). Additionally, Wasserfall (1993) claim that self-reflexivity is one of the most important techniques and philosophies for controlling the acquisition of knowledge through detecting the researcher's subjectivities in relation to the research topic and Diaz (2002) concurs, by pointing out that both the participants and the researcher produce interpretations that is 'the data'.

b) Autoethnography as a method

Researchers working within the disciplines of sociology and anthropology often employ traditional fieldwork ethnography when researching particular culture or people (Tedlock, 2011). Although poststructural ethnographers have criticised the approach's objectivity (e.g., Spry, 2011), ethnography is still inherently rooted in the positivist tradition, which advocates empirical evidence (Huang, 2010). In contrast, autoethnography seeks to go beyond the positivist tradition, by embedding the inquirer's voice into the study, thus perpetuating a shift from an interpretive ethnography to a more performative and critical form of ethnography (Ellis and Bochner, 2000; Tedlock, 2011). In this research project, the investigator utilises the autoethnographic technique of the personal narrative to produce meaningful, evocative research, grounded in personal experience (Ellis *et al.*, 2011). Ellis *et al.*, (2011:273) defines it as: 'an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)'. Thus, it is part of this study's critical feminist methodology. It is chosen because it creates a 'unique opportunities for rich, vibrant, often playful, and engaging writing' and 'represents an extension of the ethnographical impulse towards 'thick description' (Anderson and Austin, 2012:139). Furthermore, it contributes to the visibility of the researcher in the socio-cultural setting and the problematic leisure phenomenon under investigation. Finally, a distinctive contribution of the self-reflective, autoethnographic text is the analytical insight it provides

into identity construction, the phenomenological understanding of knowledge in action and the problematisation of agency (Anderson and Austin, 2012).

c) Hierarchy in the research process

The debate about the hierarchical position of the researcher in this study is briefly addressed here as part of this study epistemological stance. Many feminists argue that the hierarchical relationship between the researcher and the participants should be abolished (Oakley, 1981; Stanley and Wise, 1983; Harding, 1987) because of the ethical requirement of feminism to treat all women as equal and not subordinate. Although this ethical consideration is a relevant concern, it implies that feminist researchers should form close, personal relationships with the informants, which in some cases could result in a manipulative, one-sided bond that mimics a false sense of ethics and righteousness (Kirsch, 2005; Huisman, 2008). In this study, the researcher accepts the view that regardless of her efforts and desire to break down this power imbalance it is inevitable part of the contact with the studied participants. Chapter 5, section 5.3 features a discussion about the development of the researcher's own feminist awareness and the assumption of the 'false consciousnesses' of the participants. That is also why, in this study, the researcher is engaged in deep reflexive thought about all these aspects.

The goals of this feminist research study

Finally, many feminists argue that the main goal of feminist research must be to change the social reality and emancipate women rather than produce theory or hypothesis (Harding, 1987; Mies, 1983, 1991). Emancipatory scholars like Mies (1991) argue that research should be subordinate to the political aims of the women's movement and the researcher's goal should be to understand and overcome women's oppression and exploitation through value-free research process, which does not merely treat women as objects of investigation. Her argument, however, revolves back to the debate about the researcher's authority and hierarchical position as an expert, who possesses 'true consciousness' and will help the

participants, who live in 'false consciousness' (Gorelick, 1991:466). According to Agar (1988), this asymmetry of power results in an exploitative relationship. The solution to this dilemma, according to Gorelic (1991), is to emancipate the participants by allowing them 'voice' within the study. However, the notion of 'voice', 'consciousness and false consciousness are further criticised for being positivist in nature and thus reinforcing a researcher/researched binary (Varga-Dobai, 2012). Stanley and Wise (1983:194) enter this debate by rejecting 'the idea that scientists, or feminists, can become experts in other people's lives and ... the belief that there is one true reality to become experts about'.

This research study argues against the emancipatory model as the immediate goal of this inquiry. Rather it adopts a dialectical view of the relationship between 'research/science' and 'practice/politics' is assumed. Meaning, the researcher adopts the perspective that even though this research might not bring about universal female emancipation *per se*, it still provides valuable, thought-provoking insight into the localised mechanisms of 'oppression', power inequality and ideologies in a particular cultural setting, through the understanding of women's leisure meanings that might have positive outcomes for the participants themselves. It also seeks to evoke critical thinking within individual women, as 'the personal is still political' (Jackson and Scott, 2004) and 'the revolution' should start from the individual women in their daily lives and then 'move into the streets' as Stanley and Wise (1993) advise. Thus, areas for further investigation are identified for advancing the understanding of leisure for working women.

3.2.2 Ontological stance of the research study

In Nelson's (2003:109) view: 'Ontological questions concern how we envision the nature of reality'. Examining the philosophical debate about the relevance of the different ontological positions to feminist research is beyond the scope of this research study. Here, the ontological stance of the research study is briefly discussed as scholars like Harding (1999) and Lawson (2003) argue that epistemological debates have more advantages for feminist

research for the reasons discussed in the previous section. The term ontology is referred to here in the sense of whether or not the social entities have an external reality to the social actors or they should be considered constructions built up from the actor's perspective (Bryman, 2012). As concerns about the nature of reality and the social world are questioned by this study, the author accepts the ontological position that gravitates towards cultural relativism (social constructivism) – knowledge is culture-bound (reality is a multiple set of gendered mental social constructions) (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Also, as this study seeks to understand women's complex leisure meanings, the researcher chooses to adhere to the constructionist position rather than the positivist/objective view of independent social reality that is independent of the social actors (Brayman, 2012). Furthermore, the author acknowledges the influence of variables like class, race, gender and that various social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and other factors influence the individual's understanding of reality. Consequently, the ontological position of this inquiry falls within the view that there are multiple realities that can be apprehended in the form of mental constructions, socially and experimentally based, local and specific in nature (Bryman, 2012).

3.2.3 Methodology

In summation, this study adopts the feminist philosophical stance in order to understand the subjective work and leisure meanings of Sofian women in full-time employment. The researcher utilises qualitative methods in the form of interviews and casual conversations to address the study problem and sub-problems (Holliday, 2002; Robson, 2011; Hesse-Biber, 2014). The textual narratives (provided by the researcher and the researched) are assumed to provide 'thick description' about Sofian women's ways of perceiving and constructing the world and their reactions to it. This methodological strategy follows the contemporary developments of research on women, gender and leisure that continue to use of qualitative methods to investigate women's everyday lives and issues of leisure meanings (Henderson and Gibson, 2013). The qualitative methods used are presented in section 3.3.

The rationale for adopting a feminist approach as opposed to a more traditional positivistic view is based on the purpose of the study, which as explained previously is to understand the leisure meanings of Sofian women in full-time employment and not identify patterns or trends of leisure, which can be accessed through quantitative methods. The 'feminist methodology' is influenced by the assumptions examined in Appendix 2, as well.

3.3 Research Design: A feminist case study

This is a problem-based, holistic case study. The following definition of case study is adopted to refer to this research to avoid misinterpretation of the meaning of the concept in relation to this research inquiry: 'An empirical inquiry (e.g., a 'case'), set within its real-world context – especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident' (Yin, 2014:4). A few important points are to be made here:

- the term 'case study' stands for an approach or a stance, rather than an instrument or method for data collection (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014);
- *empirical* refers to the collection of data about what is going on in a particular setting, in this case the physical setting – the city of Sofia;
- this strategy features an *ethnographic element*, as the study's unit of analysis (women's leisure experience and related meanings are culturally value-laden);
- *multiple methods* of data collection are used (Robson, 2011).

The study's fieldwork comprises of a pilot study phase (Phase 1) and a main study phase (Phase 2) of data collection. Both phases are described in Chapter 4: Conduct of Study. As this is an exploratory study, the high flexibility of the design facilitated the refinement of the problem, sub-problems and data-gathering instruments in response to new information and self-reflective insights gathered from the pilot work done in March 2014, as described in Chapter 4. Also, because of the complexities of the research problem, the case cannot be bound by a single type of study and so this research embraces characteristics of the

different types of case studies. Table 1 gives an overview of the different types of case studies, as defined by Stake (1995) and Yin (2014), and examines the ways in which the present feminist case employs characteristic of each distinctive type.

Table 1: Definition and type of the study

Case Study Type	Definition of the specific type	The ways in which the present study embraces the characteristic of the type
Exploratory	This type of case study is used to explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes (Yin, 2014).	The study focuses on the everyday experience of Sofian women in full-time employment and the meanings of their work and leisure. It is an exploratory study because this real-world setting is relatively uncharted waters and not much is known about Bulgarian women's leisure in relation to the normative socio-culture.
Descriptive	This type of case study is used to describe a phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurred (Yin 2014).	The study also aims to provide a concise description of Sofian women's everyday lives in relation to the Bulgarian socio-culture, through the inclusion of the researcher as a study participant and through her personal narratives and interpretations.
Intrinsic	Stake (1995) uses the term intrinsic and suggests that researchers who have a genuine interest in the case should use this approach when the intent is to better understand the case. It is not undertaken primarily because the case represents other cases or because it illustrates a particular trait or problem, but because in all its particularity and ordinariness, the case itself is of interest. The purpose is NOT to come to understand some abstract construct or generic phenomenon. The purpose is NOT to build theory, although that is an option (Stake, 1995).	This is an intrinsic study because the researcher's own perspective is included in the research and she is the one interpreting the experience of the participants (and reflecting on her own identities) with the mindset of a Sofian born, feminist researcher, whose 'reality' is one of many alongside the voices of the participants. Thus, the findings of this study are likely to have limited generalisability (external validity). However, they are still relevant for the understanding of the complexities of women's leisure and contribute to the cultural perspective of feminist leisure studies.
Instrumental	This type is used to accomplish something other than understanding a particular situation. It provides insight into an issue or helps to refine a theory. The case is of secondary interest; it plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else. The case is often looked at in depth, its contexts scrutinised, its ordinary activities detailed, and because it helps the researcher pursue the external interest. The case may or may not be seen as typical of other case (Stake, 1995).	This study is partly instrumental as well because it provides an understanding of the multiple viewpoints of the participants but also relies on theory. It recognises the 'embeddedness' of the phenomenon into the social context.

Source: Adapted from Stake (1995), Robson (2011) and Yin (2014)

The case study design is chosen because it fits with the qualitative feminist leisure research agenda, which is inherently interpretive (Henderson and Shaw, 2006; Henderson and Hickerson, 2007) and because the purpose of the research is to shine light on women's paid work and leisure meanings. Additionally, the case study design was chosen because Sofian women's leisure meanings cannot be considered without the localised ideologies and discourses (Baxter and Jack, 2008), which can be exposed through a carefully designs case study. Table 2 shows an overview of the design in accordance with the sub-problems of the research and the dimensions of the case. This feminist case study design consists of four components identified by Yin (2014) to assist the researcher with constructing a rigorous design. The table includes the unit of analysis, the prepositions related to the questions to be examined, the logic linking the data to the preposition and the difficulties to be overcome.

Table 2: An Overview of the design in accordance with the sub-problems of the research and the dimensions of the case

Case Study Sub-Problems	Its Proposition(s) and related questions to be examined by the case study	The Unit(s) of Analysis	The Logic linking the data to the proposition	Inherent Difficulties to overcome
Sub-problem1: To explore Sofian women's subjective conceptualisation of leisure in order to capture the key characteristics of leisure for them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the role of leisure in women's lives? • What is the value of leisure for women? • How do women define/conceptualise leisure? • What are the tensions associated with role conflicts related to women's gendered position in society. 	the individual person (individual Sofian women)	Gender is constructed, perceived, and enacted both in and out of work settings. Subjective perceptions of gender roles are highly relevant to understanding women's experiences of work and leisure in Bulgarian society?	In the beginning of the investigation, the researcher chose to use a conceptual framework to guide the investigation, even though a case study design does not start with a priori theoretical framework (Gillham, 2000).
Sub-problem 2: To investigate Sofian women's subjective conceptualisation of work in order to capture the juxtaposition of work and leisure for them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the role of paid work in women's lives • What is the value of paid work for women? • How are work and leisure juxtaposed in individual women's lives 	the individual person (individual Sofian women)	Leisure is dependent on work for its conceptualisation. In a gendered society both work and leisure are experienced differently by man and women	The complexity of the case study of Sofian women made it difficult to delimit the case. After the pilot study, the researcher decided to focus on a set of individual cases with similarities and differences in order to address the specifics of the research problem and related sub-problems
Sub-problem 3: To uncover women's subjective perceptions of gendered discourses/ideologies in relation to work and leisure	What are the 'objective' and 'gendered/subjective' constraints to women's leisure?	the individual person (individual Sofian women)	In this gendered society, the roles for man and women are socially constructed and prescribed (Henderson <i>et al.</i> , 1996). The cultural and historical essence of women's lives indicates that these differences are created socially and that leisure behaviour is learned within a culture (Rojek, 1997).	

The rationale for using the mixed-type qualitative case study strategy shown in Table 2 is based primarily on the flexibility of the approach, which allows for the study to be deployed in a socio-culturally embedded setting, e.g., Sofia, but also includes the intrinsic interests of the researcher. Both Yin (2014) and Stake (1995) advocate the use of case study as a legitimate strategy for advancement of human knowledge, despite general criticism that generalisation is not possible when this design is used (Robson, 2011). Finally, the participant's accounts are seen as a set of individual cases. Appendix 3 acknowledges the strengths and limitations of the case study design and presents some solutions to overcome the limitations.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

The following qualitative primary data collection methods have been used in the main study phase: casual conversations, semi-structured interviews, and personal narrative. According to Henderson and Hickerson (2007), feminist leisure research advocates the use of semi-structured and in-depth interviews to study women and leisure, while the broad field of leisure studies utilises mixed methods and quantitative questionnaires. As this study focuses on the subjective meanings women attach to their work and leisure, methods such as interviews and conversations have been applied to grasp these meanings. Moreover, the epistemological stance of the inquiry embraces a reflective and autoethnographic approach (Fonow and Cook, 1991) to be adopted in order to account for the researcher's inherent socio-cultural assumptions about women and leisure in Bulgaria). Appendix 4 provides a detailed account of the appropriateness of the selected methods vis-à-vis the study sub-problems. In this section, the selected methods are reviewed and a justification for their use is provided.

Before reaching a final decision to employ only the above-mentioned data-gathering techniques the researcher considered other qualitative methods, like observations, focus groups, documents and visual materials (Holliday, 2002; Robson, 2011). Through observation, the researcher monitors the actions and behaviours of people and describes

and interprets what he/she sees. This approach is particularly useful in complementing other qualitative techniques because of its directness (Robson, 2011) and when observations are conducted in a small group for a small project as they take up a lot of time and 'immersion'. However, In view of the focus of this research study observations as a method of investigation is rejected by the investigator because the person's experiences (which depend on various subjective and social factors) cannot be simply observed. Subjective experience can be recorder and observed; however, the value-free characteristic of the method itself is of little use for the present investigation, which focuses on subjective interpretations and meanings. The reasons for rejecting participant observations as a method of empirical data collection are further discussed in Chapter 4: Conduct of Fieldwork, section 4.2.2.

Focus groups or 'group interviews' consist of groups of people discussing a particular issue (Edmiston, 1944). However, focus groups were also rejected as a method of data collection because the interaction and dynamics between the participants in the discussion are not the focus of the thesis and the number of questions for discussion is also limited. Additionally, the researcher lacks the experience to facilitate an effective uncompromised discussion. Finally, as the study's ultimate aim is to give individual participants voice in the study, without prioritising one individual's voice over another, with focus groups there is always a danger of one or more persons dominating the discussion, which would not be appropriate for this type of study (Robson, 2011).

Documents and audio-visual materials are also used in qualitative research, but specific materials dealing with Sofian women's leisure choices simply may not exist, either in Bulgarian or in English. As, explained in the introduction, some Bulgarian feminist scholars have done work on describing the historical traditions constraining women's everyday lives and identities, but women's leisure, and leisure as resistance in particular, as a focus of research, is a new theme that has not been previously explored. Moreover, it is also highly likely that any such documents would present an androcentric view of the phenomenon under investigation in accordance with the historical patriarchal tradition. So, as a result of

these considerations, the following methods were used to gain insight into participant's lives and experiences.

Casual conversations

In contrast to common misconceptions about casual conversations being unimportant and trivial, sometimes pointless, sociolinguists like Eggins and Slade (1997:6) argue that casual conversations are, in fact: 'highly structured, functionally motivated, semantic activity'. They define them as: 'talk that is not motivated by any clear pragmatic purpose.' (Eggins and Slade, 1997:19). Linguistic anthropologies Duranti (1997:250) equates 'conversational interactions' with 'everyday talk' and 'mundane exchanges', and distinguishes these from interviews, debates, press conferences, trials, religious ceremonies. Casual conversation analysis is recognised by feminist scholars as a technique that enables storytelling and/or personal narrative (Chase, 2011) and identifies the individuals participating in the communication – the storytellers in a particular physical or communicative space. Furthermore, this type of analysis is particularly useful in feminist research studies, as it usually involves either all or some of the following aspects, identified by Gaudio (2003:662): '(i) the speech situation including participants' reasons for engaging in conversation and the nonverbal activities that accompany their talk; (ii) participants' social identities and pre-existing relationships; (iii) participants' geographical location; and (iv) the temporal boundaries that mark conversational beginnings and ends'. The aim of this analysis is to showcase how the material practice of the conversation and women's understandings of the the political, economic, and ideological hierarchies (Gaudio, 2003) inform the social life in the contemporary Sofian society and consequently their leisure meanings.

The rationale for using casual conversation is firstly, to develop a good rapport with the respondents and secondly, to create a mutual sustainable relationship with them, before and during the research. In some cases where the participants are the researcher's friends such rapport was already established. In addition, the researcher has chosen to use casual

conversations for personal reasons. As a fieldworker, as a feminist researcher, and as a friend, the researcher is familiar with engaging in casual conversations with some of the participants and considers the communication a prospective source of information and way to access their personal everyday lives and 'hear their voice'. As Fonow and Cook (1991:11) claim, such linguistic practices 'reveal the cultural norms and assumptions governing gender relations'. The justification for using casual conversations in this research project is further reinforced in Appendix 5, where the advantages and disadvantages of the method are also discussed.

Semi-structured interviews

Interviewing as a research practice typically involves the researcher asking questions and receiving answers from the interviewees (Robson, 2011). Mason (2002:62–63) defines it as: 'Interactional exchange of dialogue, relatively informal style, thematic/topic centered biographical/narrative approach, co-production of knowledge involving researcher and interviewee.' Oakley (1981) is among the first feminists to problematise some textbook definitions of interviewing as a one-sided process, in which the researcher is a passive inquirer, who does not give out information, only requires it. So, one-on-one semi-structured interviews, in which the interviewees have the opportunity to ask questions back, is deemed appropriate for the purpose of the study, as it allows freedom of communication and permits a more flexible line of enquiry. In qualitative research, the types and styles of interviews are generally fully-structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Mason, 2002; Robson, 2011). The value of semi-structured interviews for this feminist research study is in the production of *thick description* of the study problem (Geertz, 1993).

The rationale for using semi-structured interviews in this case study is to generate knowledge about the duality (personally and socially bound) of women's leisure experiences in relation to the Bulgarian socio-culture. Furthermore, the epistemological and ontological positions of this project are a further justification of the preferred data collection method, as interviews

are appropriate when the purpose of the study is to explore, describe and understand the complexity of leisure and work meanings, through facilitating descriptions of women's lived experiences (Robson, 2011). Appendix 6 accounts for the advantages, disadvantages and the solutions to the disadvantages of semi-structured interviews.

Autoethnography: self-narrative/ personal narrative

As already mentioned in section 3.1, autoethnography as a method is both a process and a product, the goal of which is to fully acknowledge and develop the highly subjective experience as an intrinsic part of the research (Anderson, 2004, 2006; Denzin 2014), thus becoming a basis for scientific accountability (Holliday, 2002). In this study, the feminist researcher incorporates personal, reflexive aspects into research to shed light on how domination and power relations are reproduced in everyday life (Allen, 2000; Allen and Piercy, 2005).

The justification for using autoethnography streams from the fact that it assists the production of meaningful, evocative research grounded in personal experience in relation to a specific cultural identity (Ellis *et al.*, 2011). In this study, the researcher's personal narrative is integrated in the thesis to reflect the physical presence in the setting and her own leisure identity creation in order to complement the findings of the research effort. Another merit of this method is the forthright visibility of the researcher, which facilitates greater understanding and transparency of the chosen methodology and strategy of the research process (Anderson and Austin, 2012).

This approach and its proponents are often criticised for being too personal, too sentimental, too political and too theoretical (Adams and Holman Jones, 2008). They are, also, panned for being too self-indulgent and even narcissistic (Coffey, 1999). Moreover, autoethnographic writing faced the difficult task of 'proving' its rigour and legitimacy (Holt, 2008), as the traditional evaluation criteria do not apply to this type of research (Ellis and Bochner, 2000).

It seems that the first criticism is made by scholars who lack the necessary knowledge of the autoethnographic methodologies and its forms of representation (Holt, 2008). It is a result of misapprehensions of the genre due to a mistrust of the work of *self* (Sparkes, 2002). Ellis and Bochner (2000) attribute the accusations of narcissism and self-indulgence as a way to reinforce ethnographic orthodoxy and resist change. Thus, such disapproval of the autoethnographic approach functions exactly as the type of canonical orthodoxy the methodology seeks to challenge (Holt, 2008). Therefore, autoethnography is the optimal choice for this thesis because, as Tierney (1998:66) asserts, 'autoethnography confronts dominant forms of representation and power in an attempt to reclaim, through self-reflective response, representational spaces that have marginalised those of us at the borders'.

In terms of the second criticism, my opinion coincides with Bochner's (2000:268) view that: 'no single, unchallenged paradigm has been established for deciding what does and does not comprise valid, useful, and significant knowledge'. Thus, I suggest that the 'value' of researcher's personal narrative should be judged in terms of whether or not the work evokes an emotional and intellectual response in its audience (Richardson, 1995, 2000). The tensions and difficulties the researcher had to overcome (pre, during and post research) are presented in Chapter 5: Researcher's Reflexivity and Autoethnographic accounts.

Finally, as in this study the data is collected through different qualitative methods and it is analysed and interpreted by the investigator herself, it is important to provide an example of its origin and type. Thus, ways in which the data is interpreted in relation to the socio-cultural context are exemplified (Holliday, 2002) Some data types may overlap, as bits of talk can also be seen as description of behaviour or account of events by participants. Appendix 7 provides a catalogue of types of qualitative data and their characteristics. It contains two broad categories: what the researcher describes (a–c) and what the participants say (d–e). The category (f) includes the researcher's encounters and presence in the setting. In this study, these categories are equally epistemologically valuable.

3.5. Principles of Data Collection

The concepts of 'crystallisation' and 'bricoleurship' are the two guiding principles of empirical data collection in this research study. Both notions are consistent with the interpretive paradigm and feminist socio-cultural analysis (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Aitchison, 2000; Aitchison *et. al.* 2000). The principles and rationales for using both these approaches to data collection are discussed in the following sub-sections.

Bricoleurship

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994, 2000) drawing from Levi-Strauss (1966), a bricoleur is the qualitative researcher who chooses from an array of methods, tools, techniques and available practices in order to address the problem at hand and its assumptions. Hence, the researcher crates a *bricolage*: a 'complex, dense, reflective, collagelike creation that represents the researcher's images, understandings and interpretations of the world of phenomenon under analysis' (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:3). In the context of this inquiry, the 'bricoleur' approach is used to address the intimate links between the micro level (women's individual leisure experience) and macro level (societal-level influences) by utilising methodology founded on feminist, constructivist and phenomenological principles.

The reason for choosing 'bricoleurship' as a principle of data collection is because of the sheer profusion of available methodologies in contemporary qualitative research, and the complexity of the problem under investigation. Consequently, the researcher should be acquainted with the many interpretive approaches in order to create rigorous work (Hollinshead, 1996). As Kincheloe (2001:4) argues,

As bricoleurs recognise the limitations of a single method, the discursive structures of one disciplinary approach, what is missed by traditional practices of validation, the historicity of certified modes of knowledge production, the inseparability of knower and known, the complexity and heterogeneity of all human experience, they understand the necessity of new forms of rigor in the research process."

The researcher in this study answers calls from Denzin and Lincoln (2000:3) to qualitative researchers to employ 'hermeneutics, structuralism, semiotics, phenomenology, cultural studies and feminism'. The approach was also selected because of its interdisciplinarity nature, which allows the integration of various disciplinary perspective into one methodological framework (Kincheloe, 2001). The researcher employs the following selected aspects of bricolage, as presented by Kincheloe (2005:335):

Methodological bricolage: This case study employs numerous data-gathering strategies (interviews, observations, narratives).

Theoretical bricolage: this study is epistemologically grounded in the wide range of social-theoretical positions from constructivism, feminism philosophy, post-structuralism, cultural studies etc.

The strengths, weaknesses and limitations of being a bricoleur in this study are explored further in Appendix 8.

Crystallisation

In this study the (post)positivist methodological triangulation (i.e., the validation of findings through mixed methods research design) (Creswell and Clark, 2006) is replaced with the process of 'crystallisation' (Richardson, 1994, 2000; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Richardson and Pierre, 2005). The researcher chooses crystallisation over triangulation because unlike triangulation, whose main concern is validating, the research finding in a fixed, three-sided view of the social reality (Richardson, 1994; 2000; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000), crystallisation 'combines multiple forms of analysis and multiple genres of representation into a coherent text...building a rich and openly partial account of a phenomenon that problematises its own constructions, highlight the researcher's vulnerabilities and positionality, makes claims about socially constructed meanings, and reveals the indeterminacy of knowledge claims even as it makes them.' (Ellingson, 2009:4). Furthermore, the approach has been selected because it

fits the feminist epistemology and methodology (Reinhartz and Davidman, 1992) underpinning the inquiry. According to Ellingson (2009), crystallisation manifests in a feminist qualitative projects by: a) presenting deep, thickly described meanings about the social world; b) reflecting several contesting ways of knowledge: in this case, case study and autoethnography; c) utilises more than one genre of writing, here narrative and report; d) includes the researcher's reflexive considerations and role in the research process: persona narrative; and e) avoids positivistic claims to objectivity. The strengths, limitations and difficulties the researcher had to overcome in using crystallisation are discussed in Appendix 9.

3.6 Sampling Technique and Criteria/Binding the Case

This part of the methodology considers issues of sampling, in relation to the technique, and inclusion and exclusion criteria of determining the unit of analysis. The preferred sampling technique is 'purposive sampling'. A purposive or judgemental sampling enables the investigator to use her own logic and judgement to choose cases that will best suit addressing the study problem and related sub-problems (Saunders *et al.*, 2000). In this study, the findings from the pilot study informed the way the initial sample was extended into subsequent cases, thus heterogeneous/maximum variation sampling was selected (Saunders *et al.*, 2000). In other words, the small sample of women in full-time employment may contain cases that may be completely different. This type of sampling was chosen because it fits with the ethical requirements of non-marginalisation and the purpose of the inquiry to identify key themes and problematic areas of further investigation. The three sampling criteria were developed to choose women from the wider population to participate in the research inquiry. In the following sections, the rationale for choosing Sofia as the research setting/area is considered along with a discussion on the sampling criteria.

Research field area – the context of the feminist case study

The city of Sofia is identified as the most likely geographical location for pilot and main study fieldwork. The capital is the leading financial and political centre of Bulgaria, and as such, it is a busy, hectic and stressful urban environment to live in. Both the public and the private spheres are dominated by gender relations (Kunze, 2012) that conceivably influence all aspects of women's lives. Moreover, as the researcher's home city, the researcher is not only intimately familiar with the setting, but being 'of the culture', allows her to reflect on the interpretations of the findings in relation to her own subjectivities and sensibilities as already stated. Thus, the study benefits from the researcher's personal narratives that present an openly subjective, humanistic, perception of the contemporary Bulgarian socio-culture. The city has also been selected because it is the physical environment where Sofian women's social, personal and leisure identities are formed, negotiated and facilitated through their institutional roles. Finally, it is easily accessible and allowed for repeated visits.

Sampling technique

As already stated, purposive sampling has been chosen to identify a group of Generation Y women, who are in full-time employment and who are born and live in Sofia, to participate in this study. Unlike probability sampling where the sample is statistically chosen at random and generalisability is possible, this form of non-probability sample represents the researcher's judgement as to who is to be included in the sample, based on the knowledge of the population and the purpose of the study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), which makes the findings highly unlikely to be generalised. However, as this is not the purpose of the study, and given the complexity of the problem, purposive sampling has been deployed and participants were selected based on the criteria presented below.

Sampling criteria

Listed here are the three sampling criteria applied to select from all young and middle-aged full-time working women in Sofia for inclusion in the research sample:

All participants should be in full-time employment (at least 30 hours per week) at the time of the interview;

All informants should be women born, raised and currently living in Sofia;

All informants should be between 20 and 39 years of age (i.e. members of Generation Y)

These criteria are discussed in detail here.

Criterion 1: All participants should be in full-time employment at the time of the interview

This study focuses on the meanings of work in women's lives, which is based on the assumption that one of the most critical factors of overall life satisfaction is employment (Pearson, 2008). It is therefore imperative to include in the study only women who are full-time employed, in order to inquire about the meanings of paid work in relation to their leisure and overall life satisfaction. Thus, full-time students, younger women under 18 years of age and elderly women are excluded from the sample.

Criterion 2: All informants should be women born, raised and currently living in Sofia.

This criterion is based on the following three notions: a) 'leisure is thoroughly ethnic', b) 'culture is the basis of leisure, as of all action and interaction', c) 'leisure always takes on the particular forms and meanings of its cultural setting' (Kelly, 1987:165). That is why the study centres upon women who are born, raised and currently live in the city, where they have learned their leisure behaviour and everything they have learned from the society they live in: language, values, role definitions, worldviews and all that is though within its institutions. Furthermore, from a reflexive perspective, the Sofian identity of the participants and the researcher is also deemed important for the context of the emic/etic discussion.

Criterion 3: All informants should be between 20 and 39 years of age.

This study focuses on the generation of women born just before or shortly after the 1989 political changes in Bulgaria. The reason for this choice is twofold: firstly, as a member of this

particular generation, the researcher's leisure choice (as her own personal means of empowerment) inspired a desire to explore her peers and uncover the meanings of leisure and work for women, thus revealing problematic areas of Millennial Sofian women's lives. Secondly, the salience of leisure and work for this generation will contribute to better understanding of contemporary women's lives and the meanings of leisure in relation to their continuously changing roles. Moreover, as a number of social and economic trends had developed after the transitional period (changing normative assumptions about marriage, motherhood, employment as social identification, etc.) It is possible to assume that women in their young adulthood and early maturity have more freedom(s) than previous generations because of the development of the market economy and the introduction of the consumerist lifestyle. By focusing on these women's held conceptualisations of work and leisure in relation to the socio-cultural discourses and ideologies new insights are uncovered about the problematics of women's everyday lives.

3.7 Designing the Data Collection Method

The data collection techniques developed for the main study are described below. The modifications made in relation to the methods after the pilot study phase are presented in chapter 4, section 4.2.6. Here, the topics and themes for the casual conversations are discussed, the development of semi-structured interviews described and finally, the problematics of engaging with the personal narrative technique are examined.

Creating topics for casual conversations

According to Gaudio (2003), casual conversations are types of occurrences that happen 'naturally' and presuppose a particular type of social interaction, between parties, which conforms to the practices and norms of the social setting. As previously explained, this method was chosen as a way to investigate more intimately the unstructured stories women construct about their everyday experiences and leisure, and vis-à-vis the socio-cultural environment they occur in. So, for the purpose of understanding the meaning of Sofian

women's leisure choice, the plan is to focus mainly on casual conversations with the interviewees, before and after interviews. Moreover, as some of the participants are the researcher's friends and she meets with them on a regular basis, this interaction (in the form of casual talk) is an important source of information and is included in the study. So, a plan is devised to engage in casual conversations with both friends and acquaintances on topics of everyday nature, like work, family, leisure and other personal relationships. The conversations are to have similar phases, orientation and flow, regardless of whether the participant is a friend or an acquaintance (A person the researcher has met, but does not have intimate knowledge of is referred to as an acquaintance in this study). A noticeable difference in the verbal communication is primarily the slightly more formal tone of the conversation with an acquaintance. Only conversations that took place during the pilot data collection phase and the main data collection are included in the study, as to include all past, present and on-going conversations would be a daunting task. No audio-recording was used during the discussion and thus the researcher relied on her own recollection. All conversations consist of the following phases: 1) typical, customary greetings, 2) talk of unrelated to the research topics, 3) talk of topics related to the study, 4) closure.

As a consequence of the spontaneity of the conversations and their unstructured nature, a schedule of the discussions could not be established in advance. Additionally, the duration, depth of discussion and other additional topics of conversation could not be predicted; however, some broad guiding themes were designed to provoke a discussion linked to the problem and sub-problem of the research. These topics and themes are listed here:

- Women's everyday routines
- The work–leisure balance
- The centrality and role of work and leisure respectively
- The nature of leisure and perceived constraints
- General, societal assumptions about leisure and work
- Perceptions about the 'self', and perceptions about 'others' in relation to leisure and work

The reason for the preliminary development of the above-mentioned themes is to help focus the flow of the casual conversations in a direction relevant for the study, without being obtrusive. Table 3 presents the themes for discussion, the rationale for using them and their recognised contribution to the study problem and sub-problem is stated. All conversations were expected to be carried out in Bulgarian language and then translated and transcribed by the researcher in the convenience of her home, as soon as possible. No recording device was planned to be used for this method. The conversations were written down in the research's journal and were complemented by the researcher's reflexive accounts.

Table 3: The relevance of casual conversation themes to the research study

Casual conversations theme	Justification for using it	Contribution to the study	Relevance of the theme to the study sub-problems
The everyday routines of women	Theme (1) helps identify problematic areas of women's everyday lives	Understanding notions of leisure from the particular, individual points of view of Sofian women	Sub-problem 1 Sub-problem 2
Understandings of the work–leisure relationship and work–leisure balance	Theme (2) helps identify the defining and constraining and/or empowering elements of leisure and work	Gaining knowledge of women's ways to balance work, and leisure and the meanings they attach to their choices and decisions	Sub-problem 1 Sub-problem 2
The centrality and role of work and leisure to women's lives	Theme (3) facilitates an understanding of how women prioritise their work and leisure pursuits.	Gaining informed understanding of how interconnected work and leisure are and what this means for Sofian women	Sub-problem 1 Sub-problem 2
Understandings of the nature of leisure and perceived constraints	Theme (4) considers the role of leisure and its function for the individual.	Gaining awareness and comprehension of the forms of structural power or local ideologies are being resisted	Sub-problem 2
General, societal gendered assumptions about leisure and work	Theme (5) helps facilitate an understanding of the socio-cultural factors/assumptions and their influence on women's leisure choices	Contribute to the questions of whether women's leisure may be considered as conscious acts of resistance to these assumptions and	Sub-problem 1 Sub-problem 2
Perceptions about the 'self', and perceptions about 'others' in relation to leisure and work	Theme (6) considers the role of leisure in constructions of the 'self'	Contributes to the analysis of leisure as self-expression and self-identification	Sub-problem 1 Sub-problem 2
Power relations and leisure	Theme (7) seeks to discover the ways in which leisure is related to personal and/or collective resistance and empowerment	Contribute to knowledge about the nature of the oppression/constraint that is being resisted through leisure	Sub-problem 1 Sub-problem 2

Source: Adapted from Robson (2011)

Developing semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interview schedule consists of three main parts; each part corresponds to a research sub-problem. After the introductory Part One, Part Two focuses on the interrelationship between work and leisure and related issues of the positive and negative aspects of employment. It features questions mainly about women's leisure choices and practices and the centrality of leisure in their lives. Part Three puts the emphasis on women's perceptions of their roles within society and the ways they may manifest in and out of work settings. In Appendix 10, the semi-structured interview guide is exhibited. It presents the themes and specific questions the researcher discussed with the interviewees.

Process of writing autoethnography

The rationale for implementing the autoethnographic narrative in the feminist case study was already discussed in section 3.4. In this section, some related difficulties the researcher struggled to overcome are identified, as this method highly personalised and emotionally-charged narrative requires

...that we interrogate what we think and believe, and that we challenge our own assumptions, asking over and over if we have penetrated as many layers of our own defences, fears, and insecurities as our project requires. It asks that we rethink and revise our lives, making conscious decisions about who and how we want to be. And in the process, it seeks a story that is hopeful, where authors ultimately write themselves as survivors of the story they are living. (Custer, 2014:1)

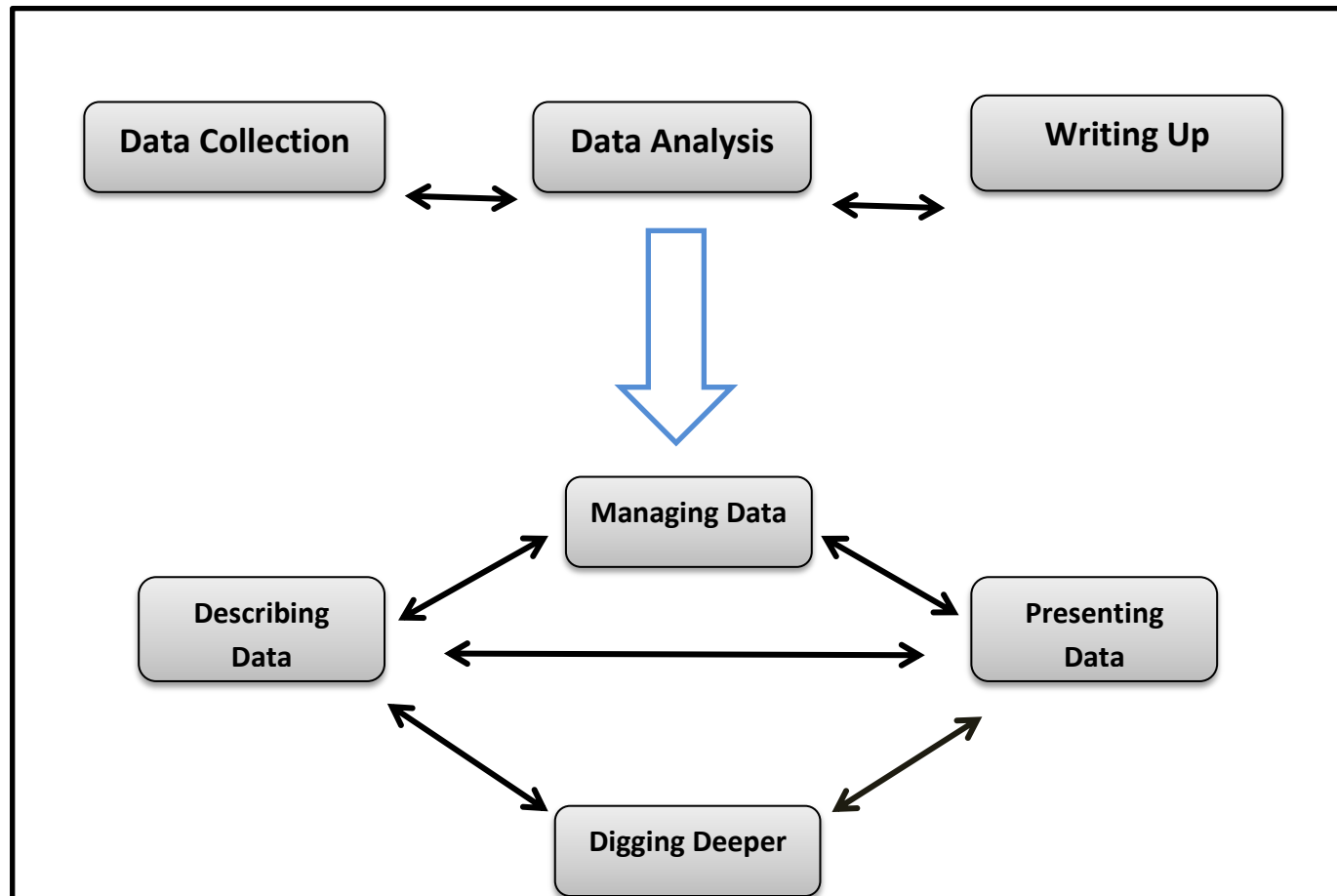
Having in mind this difficult process, the researcher began the storytelling process from the very beginning of the investigation, by keeping a research journal in which she made daily entries not only for methodological purposes but for possible emic/etic dilemmas as well. The personal narrative is different from other forms of discourse because it represents a sequence/consequence storyline and timeline (Riessman, 1993, 2008). Events are chosen, organised, connected and evaluated and presented as meaningful by the researcher, whose memory is selective, Holloway and Wheeler (2002) warn.

Chapter 5 is entirely dedicated to the researcher's reflexive and autoethnographic accounts, pre, during and post research. Additionally, Chapter 4 features some reflexive thoughts about the pilot study fieldwork carried out in Sofia.

3.8 Approach to Data Analysis

This section of the methodology presents the approach to qualitative data analysis and describes the phases and steps followed to carry out the interpretation. This analytical procedure was utilised in both the main study and the pilot study. The data analysis itself, which is interrelated to the process of data collection and writing up the interpretation, is visualised in Figure 1 and the steps of analysis discussed in detail as well (Froggatt, 2001). Additionally in this research study, discourse analysis (Taylor, 2001), narrative analysis and other forms of qualitative data analysis are not utilised for the reasons displayed in Appendix 11. Additionally, Appendix 12 exhibits the advantages and disadvantages associated with the chosen thematic analysis and presents solutions proposed by the researcher to minimise the disadvantages.

Figure 1: Iterative processes in qualitative data analysis



Source: Based on Froggatt (2001:434)

As stated by Creswell (2014), the first step of qualitative analysis is the organisation of the data and its preparation for interpretation. As the researcher recorded the interviews on a digital recording device, the transcription is done by the researcher manually, and not using a word-processing package. For the purposes of safe-keeping, accessibility and confidentiality, all interviews are transcribed and translated verbatim, saved on a password-protected laptop computer and coded (Froggatt 2001). According to Arksey and Knight (1999:141) 'Transcription is a part of the organisation and management of the data. It is the production of a written record of the interview'. The audio recording was transcribed in Bulgarian first and then translated into English. And coding is the process of giving labels ('codes') to chunks (words, phrases, paragraphs, etc.) labelling them as examples of a particular 'thing', which may be of interest in the set of materials obtained (Robson, 2011:469).

The next step of the analysis is to read through all the data to familiarise oneself with it (Rice and Ezzy, 1999; Robson, 2011). As this study uses a flexible design, this is an on-going process; however, once all data were collected the researcher allowed herself some time to immerse herself into the gathered information so that conformation or modification of earlier assumptions about meanings could be carried out.

In Creswell's (2014) view, the third step is a more detailed and specific analysis, which involves sorting the different codes into themes and sub-themes. The author utilised the instructions provided by Tesch (1990) to carry out the analysis:

- Categorise the segments of text, looking for new, emerging ones, and write the code, next to the relevant passage.
- The researcher then names the categories, which are linked to a particular concept and thinks about the possible ways they interrelate.
- Next, the investigator puts quotes relating to each category together and re-examines them.

- Then appropriate changes are made to categories and quotations recorded, where necessary.

The overall analysis of all textual data, is assisted by a computer software program – NVivo 11. Creswell (2014) advocates the use of qualitative software to assist the data analysis. Robson (2011) notes that the use of specialist qualitative data analysis package like NVivo can be extremely useful to the researcher because it enables him/her to categorise, code and build description without compromising participant's subjective values, which is interpreted and represented by the researcher herself. Moreover, NVivo is the preferred data analysis software for this research study, because it does not favour a particular methodology. It is specifically designed to facilitate qualitative data analysis techniques, it is user friendly and enables a more efficient and effective sorting and coding. The advantages and disadvantages of specialist QDA (qualitative data analysis) packages are discussed by Robson (2011:472) and are shown in Appendix 13, along with the rationale for using NVivo 11 and the ways to minimise the disadvantages and carry out a trustworthy analysis.

So, the process of qualitative data analysis proposed by Frogatt (2001), and illustrated in Figure 1, is examined in detail below. It is an on-going process that was finally completed in 2015. The analysis went through the following steps.

Step 1: Managing the data

As mentioned above, Frogatt (2001) calls the organisational stage of qualitative data analysis 'managing the data'. In this stage, the researcher transcribed, translated and uploaded the data into NVivo 11. At the beginning of the analysis, inductive coding approach was initiated – themes, categories and concepts deriving from the data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), were identified, and were not predetermined. This type of coding is referring to by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as an in vivo coding. For instance, descriptive codes of concepts such as 'party animal' and 'snowboarding' are identified. These are descriptive codes, done on first-

level coding: attaching labels to groups of words (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Gibbs, 2007). These codes were identified at the very beginning from reading through the data.

Step 2: Describing the data

Through repeated readings of the corpus of data, the researcher continued to code the data on the second level: grouping the initial codes into a smaller number of themes (Gibbs, 2007) so that gradually, a framework of meaningful codes is created.

In NVivo 11 terminology: 'nodes' are created to represent, identify and label the segments of text on first and second level coding. The nodes are hierarchically structured into parent and child nodes. Thus, the researcher was able to identify themes, sub-themes and sub-sub-themes, by grouping the nodes into a smaller number of units under thematic headlines, based on noticeable patterns in the content (Robson, 2011). As advised by Patton (1999), the researcher started recognising themes that are both 'data-driven' and 'theory-driven'. For instance, the broad theme of 'leisure constraints' is a theme originally derived the broad leisure literature. This theme is comprised of other sub-themes such as '*objective*' and '*gender*' constraints. A data-driven sub-theme is 'the irony of emancipation'.

Step 3: Digging deeper

The digging deeper step includes a review of all initially created themes and sub-themes and checking whether the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire corpus of data. Revision of some of the initial codes is done and/or themes, if necessary. The researcher then reads all the extracts from each theme and considered whether they appear to form a coherent pattern. Huberman and Miles (1994) call this process pattern coding. By performing pattern coding the researcher converted the data into smaller analytical units; the process facilitated a more focused fieldwork during the main data collection phase; it proved useful in the elaboration of a cognitive map for understanding the local identities and interactions and finally, it foregrounded the analysis of emerging, surfacing codes (Huberman and Miles, 1994). All of the described steps were done repeatedly, until the researcher was

satisfied with the way the analysis represented the meaning of the data. For instance, at this pilot stage, two new aspects of women's work–leisure relationship were discovered, namely the centrality of leisure in women's lives and their entitlement to it. The analysis was considered complete when the researcher had created an overall framework of the relationship between the concepts, ideas and the ways they fit together to lead to an explanation of the meanings of women's leisure vis-à-vis the Bulgarian socio-culture.

Step 4: Presenting the data

There are numerous ways of presenting qualitative data (Robson, 2011; Creswell, 2014). In this study, 'narrative passages' are used to exemplify the findings as well as convey the meaning. In addition, data is displayed and visualised in the form of tables. Segments of texts are used to demonstrate each of the categories emerging from the data. In Chapter 4, section 4.2.4 data from the pilot study is presented and in Chapter 6: Findings, the main study data is displayed.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

To ensure ethical conduct of the study and data collection, the researcher is guided by both the British Sociological Association's 'Statement of ethical practice' (BSA, 2002) and the National Association of Social Workers' 'Code of Ethics (NASWCE, 2008). The rationale for using the BSA's (2002) general guidelines for ethical conduct of research is rooted in the nature of the investigation, which is inherently entrenched in the sociological tradition and theory of research. Additionally, McCormick (2012) argues that feminist social research can benefit from applying the NASWCE code of research practice, particularly in relation to the relationships between researcher and participants and obtaining informed consent. Therefore, in order to adhere to the highest level of ethical practice, the researcher refers to both statements. The ethical aspects that the researcher focused on are: the professional integrity of the investigator; the relationship with the participants; preserving the anonymity of

the participants; and following the principle of confidentiality. The ethical statement for conducting ethical research is offered in Appendix 14.

3.10 Rigour of Qualitative Research: Matters of trustworthiness

The 'trustworthiness' of findings from a qualitative research with a flexible design has been a long-listing topic of debate among adherents of the positivist and the interpretivist traditions (Robson, 2011; Carcary, 2009). Scholars like Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Wolcott (1994) reject the positivist notions of validity, reliability and generalisability of qualitative research because different methodologies take different approaches to validity and any attempts to generate a common set of validation criteria would be ineffective (Porter, 2007). Kvale (1996:229) claims that the above-mentioned standards have reached the status of a 'scientific holy trinity' among the positivist research community. However, 'the linguistic and interpretive turn of the twentieth century means that new criteria need to be established for evaluating the worthiness of qualitative research' (Jamal and Hollinshead, 2001:76). Corbin Strauss (2015:266) suggest that the positivist criteria need to be redefined in order to 'fit the realities of qualitative research and the complexities of the social phenomena that we seek to understand'. Thus, reliability and validity are avoided by many proponents of the qualitative, interpretivist, non-positivistic social inquiries. Instead, Guba (1981) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, dependability, conformability and in 1994, Guba and Lincoln added a fifth criterion, *authenticity*, as the 'standard' means of enhancing the 'trustworthiness' of qualitative research. In this feminist case study, the 'trustworthiness' construct is used as an alternative means to addressing the issues of validity and reliability and generalisability. In the following sections, the concepts are defined and discussed in detail in relation to the trustworthiness of the present research study.

'Confirming' the 'validity' of research

From an interpretivist perspective, validity refers to how well the research method investigates what it seeks to investigate (Mason, 2002; Ritchie and Nichollos, 2014) and the extent to which the researcher succeeds in acquiring and representing participant's knowledge and meanings. The interpretivist stance 'encompass[es] the philosophical assumption of multiple constructed realities, which can only be studied holistically (meaning, the knower and known are interactive, inseparable)' (Jamal and Hollinshead, 2001:76). This line of thought suggests that inquiry is not value-free, on the contrary, it is value-bound (Jamal and Hollinshead, 2001). Thus, the issue of 'validity' is rooted in the philosophical underpinnings of the study's research design and its fundamental assumptions (Lincoln, 2001). This involves demonstrating that the research methods accurately identify and describe the phenomenon under investigation. The issue of validity and reliability of a feminist case study research is under scrutiny as it advocates critical methodologies and philosophies, which as mention above are consider by some scholars to be unscientific. In a positivistic study, the validity of the results is ensured by method triangulation (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). In contrast, this study, utilises the principles of crystallisation and trustworthiness criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to showcase the merits of this research project. Appendix 15 shows the techniques used to establish trustworthiness.

Reliability of research

Reliability is largely concerned with whether a study can be repeated by other researchers using the same methodology and data-gathering methods (Kvale, 1996; Mason, 2002; Yin, 2003). The concept of reliability, similarly to validity, is associated with positivistic, quantitative, fixed design research (Robson, 2011). According to Guba and Lincoln (1989:234), 'reliability is a precondition of validity'. From an interpretivist perspective, reliability is concerned with demonstrability: showing that the researcher has not misinterpreted or inverted the data, or has being careless with the interpretation (Mason, 2002). That is why researchers using flexible design need to account for the strengthes and

weaknesses of the methods they use and be able to show their workings (Holliday, 2002) in order to minimise the risks of common pitfalls. This research utilises the techniques shown in Appendix 15.

Generalisability of this research study

The term generalisability refers to the question of how theories, findings or conclusions which are generated in a particular setting can be applied to another (Yin, 2014). Maxwell (1992) distinguishes between *internal* and *external* generalisability. *Internal* refers to generalisability within the study's setting and *external* refers to generalisability beyond the setting.

In this case, external validity is not an issue as in qualitative research statistical generalisability to a wider population is not the goal. On the contrary, as Carcary (2009:15) asserts,

the main focus in qualitative research is on insuring appropriate representation of the study's events and on understanding the key issues under investigation. However, because of the nature of individuals and organisations, it is not unreasonable to expect that some findings may be transferable to other organisations.

For instance, it can be argued that some relevant theories or hypotheses inducted from this study may be applicable to working women in other Eastern European countries with similar socio-historical developments or circumstances. Thus, external generalisability is not a concern of this research study, rather it seeks to understand and explain the problematics of Sofian women's leisure choices and recommend aspects for further investigation.

3.11 Summary of the Chapter: Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology employed in this research study in order to address the study problem and sub-problems. It adopts a flexible, emerging case study design, which consists of two stages of fieldwork and empirical data collection – Phase 1: pilot study and Phase 2: main study. In the first stage, unstructured interviews, participant observations and casual conversations are chosen as data-gathering tools. Interviews were conducted with

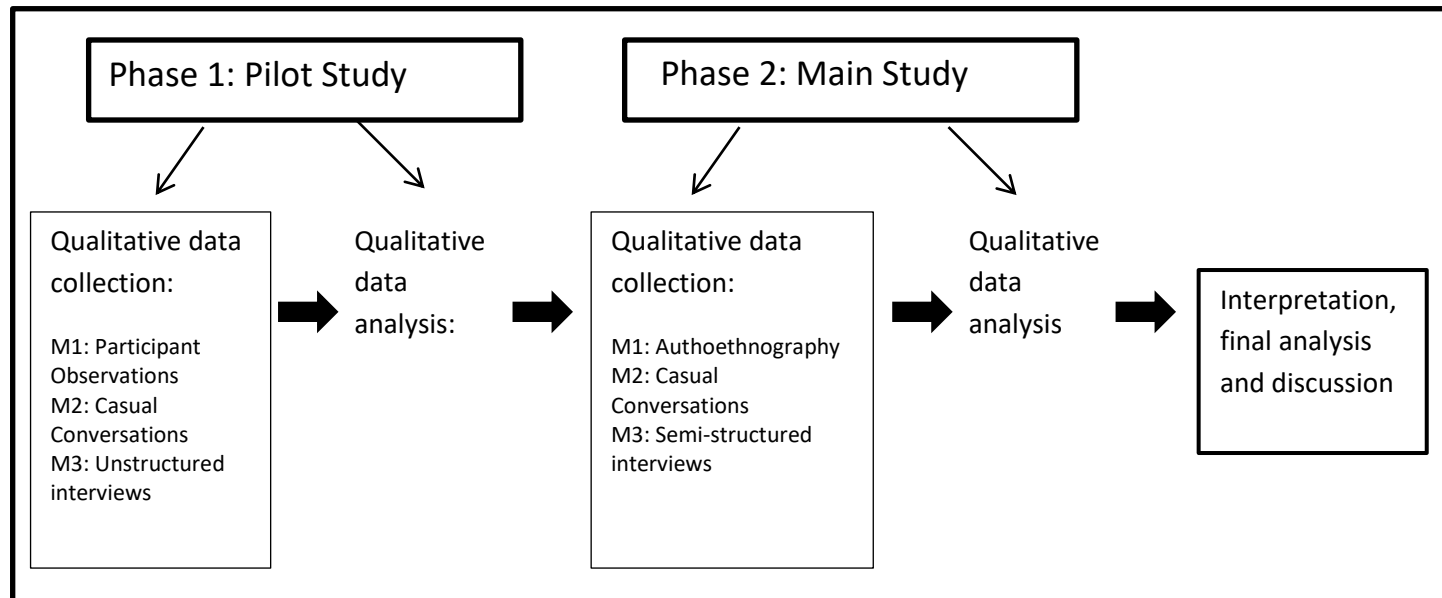
three Sofian women, who work full-time, using a purposive sampling approach. In the second stage, semi-structured interviews, casual conversations and the personal narrative were used utilising the same sampling approach. In the next chapter, a detailed account of the both phases is given. In addition, the management and interpretation of the data was assisted by the qualitative data analysis software NVivo 11. The purpose of the pilot stage was to refine the methodological approach for the main study, in terms of unit of analysis, data collection methods, refinement of sub-problems and approach to reflexivity.

Chapter 4: Conduct of Fieldwork

4.1 Introduction to the Conduct of Fieldwork

This chapter introduces the conduct of fieldwork of this feminist case study, which consists of two phases: Phase 1: pilot study and Phase 2: main study. The first part of this chapter shows the piloting stage, which includes the testing of the preliminary conceptual framework, sampling choices, development of data collection methods and the analysis of preliminary findings. It is complemented by the reflective, personal narrative of the researcher in relation to her position and presence in the field and the difficulties related to the progress of the research. The second part of this chapter reviews the conduct of the main study, which include the changes made to the research following the pilot study in view of matters of data collection and also features the continuing researcher's reflexive accounts in the personal narrative form. Finally, this chapter demonstrates the appropriateness of the feminist methodological approach described in the previous chapter, in relation to exploring the issues of meanings of Sofian women's leisure and work. Figure 2 shows the sequence of the emergent design, proposed by Creswell (2014). The sequential emergent design was chosen because it fits with the exploratory nature of the case study, in which a theoretical framework is applied to guide the investigation and narrow it down.

Figure 2: Phases of the sequential emergent design



Source: Adapted from Creswell (2014:213)

4.2 Phase 1: Conduct of Pilot Study

This section covers the pilot fieldwork carried out by the researcher over a period of three weeks, between the dates of 3th March, 2014, and 24th March, 2014, which was the first step of carrying out the research design. The following sections present the need for and the purpose of the preliminary study and describe the initial contact with participants, the data collection process and an overview of the pilot study findings. At the time of the pilot study fieldwork, the researcher utilised a thematic framework adopted from Kelly's (1987) dialectical analysis of leisure (refer to Appendix 16) that explains the theoretical underpinnings of leisure phenomenon. This framework was eventually abandoned in favour of the specific feminist approaches reviewed in Chapter 3, section 3.2 Research philosophy. Kelly's (1987) framework of leisure theories was rejected because there was a need to narrow down and focus of the investigation. Furthermore, although the dialectical approach presented above was useful in terms of leisure conceptualisation and related hypothesis forming during the course of the fieldwork, the researcher chose a critical feminist paradigm as an epistemological and methodological framework that suited the purpose of the investigation better. The pilot study findings are discussed in relation to the main data collection and the overall research strategy. The findings were expected to contribute to the way the key concepts intersect to help narrow the focus of the research inquiry. The next chapter examines in detail the rationale for this decision and its consequences for the conduct of Phase 2: Conduct of main study.

As explained in the previous chapter, pilot fieldwork was necessary to address some practical and methodological aspects of the research process, as well as to help refine the research problem and sub-problems. As this study incorporates a flexible design (Robson, 2011), the researcher had the opportunity to modify the initial sub-problems based on the pilot fieldwork. At this stage, piloting of possible data-gathering techniques was carried out, to determine the appropriateness of the chosen qualitative strategy. As discussed in the previous chapter, qualitative research methods were selected to address the study problem.

However, in the pilot stage, only casual conversations, unstructured interviews and observations were piloted. Table 8 in section 4.2.2 describes the selected methods and their contextual strengths and weaknesses and the solutions utilised for the weaknesses.

Unlike other studies with fixed research design, at this stage of the inquiry the research problem and sub-problems were not fully developed and formulated because paucity of information exists on the contemporary issues linked to the nature of women's work and leisure in Bulgaria. That is why the researcher formulated the study problem and sub-problems based partly on reviewing the leisure literature and identifying some of the orthodox sociological approaches used to define, explain and describe leisure. Consequently, Kelly's (1987) framework was chosen as the theoretical framework to guide the investigation in the preliminary stage, as it combines the dialectics of both the Social and the Existential (individual) (Kelly, 1987), in accordance with the formulated study problem pre and during pilot stage. A detailed account of the function and application of this framework is discussed in Appendix 16.

The rationale for carrying out a pilot study was to explore the everyday lives of women's lives in relation to the work and leisure, which would serve as a stepping-stone for the investigation. Additionally, as this was the first time the researcher was applying some of the data-gathering tools and techniques, their utilisation was a personal challenge and a test to her interpersonal skills. Moreover, although the researcher was familiar with the research setting, she had been living and studying in England for a long time and thus her multiple identities had come into play, in relation to the research topic and problem. For these reasons, a pilot study was used to address these matters, help narrow the focus of the investigation and possibly uncover problematic areas or silent aspects of Sofian women's everyday lives that need to be investigated.

4.2.1 Sampling Procedure

The fieldwork consisted of the following elements, as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) who provide general guidelines for initial sampling and data collection.

Sampling technique and sampling criterion

The sample

As stated in the previous chapter, a purposive sampling technique (Bryman, 2012; Saunders *et al.*, 2016) was used to select the first three interviewees. Frankel and Devers (2000:264) claim that: 'Purposive sampling strategies are designed to enhance understanding of selected individuals or group experience(s) or for developing of theories and concepts'. Thus, the inherent bias of the method of selection contributes to the purpose, credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings (Tongco, 2007), as they are highly contextual and case-dependant (Patton, 1999). The three participants were identified as typical cases (i.e., those who are 'normal' or 'average' for those being studied) (Frankel and Devers, 2000:265).

There are some limitations to purposive sampling (Patton, 1999). Firstly, only a limited number of leisure situations could be observed, as it was simply impossible to include all of them. That is why the researcher chose only the ones she considered symbolically significant to the study (based on her emic/etic positions and interpretation) out of an infinite number of occurrences. Secondly, the temporal limitation imposes restrictions on the time and place of the studied phenomenon. For instance, as the study progresses, so did the lives of participants and changes inevitable occur, which may or may not impact their social circumstances, decisions and actions. Thus, the findings of the pilot study represent a specific moment in time and space and may not be generalised. Finally, findings are limited only to the people that are being studied and were used only to inform the main study fieldwork.

The rationale for using purposive sample and not probability sampling is because of issues of voice, reflexivity and representativeness and not generalisability, as examined in Chapter 3.

Three Sofian women in full-time employment were selected (see Table 6: Profile of Pilot Study Participants). The city of Sofia was chosen mainly on the grounds of convenience and reflexivity, as the researcher's home city and its accessibility. It allows for repeat visits and member checking to be done.

To preserve the anonymity of the informants, pseudonyms were used to refer to them. Table 4 presents a profile of the participants, their occupation at the time of the interviews and their marital and relationship status.

Table 4: Profile of pilot study participants

Pseudonym	Age	Occupation	Marital Status/Relationship Status	Number of children
Silvia	27	PR consultant	In a heterosexual relationship	0
Milena	30	Office assistant	Divorced/in a heterosexual relationship	0
Yana	27	Project manager at an international firm	In a heterosexual relationship	0

Source: Author's own work

Sampling criteria

The sampling criteria presented in Chapter 3, section 3.6 was applied for both the pilot study and the main study. Silvia was the researcher's classmate from her undergraduate studies, and she was considered a friend, but not a very close one; Milena was a former high school classmate, and was considered a close friend. Finally, Yana was a recent acquaintance. As there is a pre-existing friendship between some of the respondents and the researcher, there are some implications for the feminist research process that the researcher needed to consider. Table 5 examines the assumptions regarding the possibility of pre-existing

friendship between researchers and researched and discusses the strengths and weaknesses of interviewing close friends and acquaintances as the degree of relationship varies. This aspect of the research process was carefully considered in the main study as well, as Cotterill (1992:593) encourages feminist researchers to explore women's research experience: 'It is one more dimension of women's experience which has been overlooked and as a part of putting the subjective in the knowledge'. For this reason, Table 7 scrutinises the implications of interviewing close friends and acquaintances, as discussed by Harris (2002), Glesne and Peshkin (1992) and Cotterill (1992) and reviews some solutions to these issues. Related issues of power and hierarchy are also discussed in Chapter 5, Researcher's reflexivity.

Table 5: Interviewing close friends and acquaintances: strenghts, weaknesses and solutions

Perceived/Contextual Strengths	Perceived/Contextual Weaknesses	Way to minimise the Weaknesses
The researcher and researched share assumptions of cultural meninges of behaviour, actions, events, and the context, as they share similar socio-cultural background and ethnographic characteristics. Thus reducing the power dynamics that infuse research.	However, women are generally divided by other structural variables like, class, age, race, nationality, sexual preference and disability, which can affect the way they women interpret and understand the questions.	As this study aims to give voice to women and examine their subjective experiences, the differences and similarities between women are noted in terms of sampling. For example, single women, women with children and women in same-sex relationships are included in the main study sample.
Shared experiences of the normative socio-culture and its institutions. This leads to a more intimate, non-hierarchical relationship between the researcher and researched, which helps eliminate the artificial subject/object divide.	It is possible for the respondent to over-identify with the researcher and even to modify their behaviour or comments to please the interviewer (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992).	This is a possibility for all interview situations. The researcher assumed that none of the participants had a motive to modify their behaviour or answers.
Due to already established trust and rapport, the interviewees talk freely and openly and they exhibit genuine interest in the study.	Cotterill (1992) implies that most interviews are initially formal, but this may not be the case with long-standing friends. In this case, it may be unclear how the respondent views the researcher: are you a friend doing research or a researcher who is a friend? This can affect the recording of the interview, as it may not be clear when the casual catching-up ends and the interview begins. Interviewing friends involves a lot of catching up first: sometimes it's hard to know when you are moving from the informal to the formal.	The interviews were more focused and as some of the informants had prior knowledge of the researcher's work, fully informed consent for participation was easier to obtain. That is why casual conversations were included as a data collection method, to enhance the interview data, especially in the main data collection phase, when acquaintances were interviewed.
Due to the nature of the study and the fact that interviews are time-consuming, the participants were willing to spare more time from their busy schedules without hesitation. Also, the making of arrangements to meet was relatively easy.	A friend may feel compelled to disclose information that they might otherwise not, motivated by their concern to give the investigator what they think want in the interview. In cases of already established trust and rapport, there is a possibility of interviewees revealing sensitive, personal information that may later prove uncomfortable for both researched and researcher.	The researcher is aware of this possibility and the dilemma which arises from it. Is it ethical to disclose this highly personal information that otherwise might not be revealed. These dilemmas are addressed in the reflexivity chapter 5 of this thesis.
Extensive personal knowledge of the research area and the participant's personal lives. As an insider, the researcher is able to reflect on the relationship with the interviewees and thus <i>'put the subjective in the knowledge'</i> .	The roles of researcher and friend could become blurred. An informant may make a disclosure, expecting the researcher to make a similar, reciprocal disclosure, as expected in friendship. This may be discomforting to both parties.	The researcher is aware of these possible scenarios and tries to deal with them in appropriate ways, which in this case, might include mutual shearing of personal information.

Source: Adapted from Glesne and Peshkin (1992) and Cotterill (1992)

Making initial contact with participants, negotiating consent

The first three women were contacted through social media and were invited to participate in the study. These specific individuals were selected because they fitted the sampling criteria presented in Chapter 3, section 3.6. Participants were sent consent letter forms that featured an overview of the research study (translated into Bulgarian language by the researcher) in accordance with the ethical requirements of conducting social research. Appendix 17a contains the informed consent form sent to each individual. At this point of the emergent design, no possible harm (psychological or physical) to the participants was anticipated. However, the dilemmas described in Table 5 were identified as problematic areas and the researcher was prepared to reflect on them and discusses them further in the following sub-sections.

Moreover, the researcher advised the participants of their right to withdraw from the interview at any time, if they felt uncomfortable in any way. Even though the research study design was not fully established at this point of the investigation and the study sub-problems were likely to change, the researcher followed the ethical requirements of conducting feminist researcher, to the best of her abilities. All respondents were informed about the topic of the investigation and were assured that participation is voluntary, anonymity is guaranteed and they can terminate their participation at any time without prejudice. Additionally, they were notified that this is the initial fieldwork and follow-up study would be carried out in the future based on the interpretation of the findings. Obtaining fully informed consent from the participants was not a difficult task, as some participants had previous knowledge about the project, were intrigued by the topic, and were willing to talk about their leisure without hesitation.

Building and maintaining trust

According to many scholars (Lincoln and Guba, 1985;; Holliday, 2002; Robson, 2011; Janesick, 2016), this aspect of research is essential to qualitative, interpretive and feminist

studies where, the rapport with participants is the key to successful communication. As explained above, the researcher had the advantage of already establishing a relationship of trust with the first few informants and was successful in provoking interest in others. The researcher assumed that the respondents believed in her integrity as a researcher and a friend or acquaintance and were candid and forthcoming. For the main study, other women were identified, who were friendly acquaintances and some of the researcher's close friends. They were also contacted through social media. The reflexive account of the researcher about her initial presence in the field is presented in Chapter 5, section 5.2.

4.2.2 Methods utilised in data collection

Table 6 presents information on the contextual strengths and weaknesses of the methods used in Phase 1: Preliminary data collection and the ways in which the researcher attempted to maximise the strengths and minimise the weaknesses. In section 4.2.3, a detailed account of the development of the methods and the rationale for utilising them is presented.

Table 6: Methods used in Phase 1 Pilot study

Methods Considered	Common/Contextual Strengths	Common/Contextual Weaknesses	Ways of Maximising the Strengths and Minimising the Weaknesses in Relation to the city of Sofia research setting
Participant Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides familiarity with the cultural milieu. Provides context to behaviour. Documents unspoken rules of behaviour. Less intrusive than interview methods. Provides insight into people's interactions. Provides descriptive data about a specific culture. Useful with small groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time-consuming (continued and repeated immersion in setting). Recording field notes is cumbersome. Simultaneous observing and recording can be difficult Field notes can be subjective. The reactivity effect has serious methodological and ethical effects. 	<p>As observations may take different forms at different stages of the inquiry, the researcher attempted this tool when she first entered the research setting in order to develop some sense of what is seminal and what is silent within the context. The researcher kept field notes in her research diary, which served to identify emergent data. However, these observations were only used in this initial stage of the investigation to help the researcher with the preliminary units of analysis.</p> <p>Observations are not be used as a method of empirical data collection in the following stages of the research for the reasons described in section 4.3.1.</p>
Casual conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Characterised by total lack of structure and control, which allows the identification of silent and emergent issues within the research setting. Suitable for the beginning of an investigation, in which the researcher is getting acquainted with the context. Useful for building rapport, and uncovering other topics of interest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It requires constant writing up of conversations and typing up of filed notes. Requires personal skills and diligence. 	<p>The researcher found this method to be appropriate in the preliminary stage, as it initiated the reflective and introspective aspects of the research topic as well as the role, position and personal bias of the investigator herself.</p> <p>Additionally, the researcher made use of the informal, unstructured nature of the casual conversations to help identify relevant problematic aspects of women's leisure choices by looking into their everyday, natural verbal communication.</p>
Unstructured Interviews:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtaining here-and-now information/constructions of people's personal experiences, life stories, feelings, motivations, claims, concerns and understandings of a topic. Useful for sensitive topics. Gain in-depth information. No set order of questions. Get personal stories, experiences of people. The interviewer and the interviewees co-create knowledge and meaning in the interview setting and thereby co-construct reality. The respondents have opportunity to guide the conversation in a relevant to them direction, thus leading the investigation to new insights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More informal, one-to-one interview. Need skills to establish rapport, use motivational probes, listen and react to interviewees. Flexibility needed to change topic order in interview guide following interviewee's story. Transcription of interviews is difficult and time-consuming Interviews can take up a great amount of time and cost for the interviews to take place. 	<p>Interviewing is the primary instrument of data collection in this study. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were considered appropriate to understand women's leisure choices and their meanings.</p> <p>Also, the establishment of rapport was easier because the interviewees were researcher's friends and they were already acquainted with the topic of research, which made the process of scheduling and carrying out interviews much easier.</p> <p>However, unstructured interviews required scheduled sessions to be carried out with each of the participants, so that all the topics of discussion could be covered.</p> <p>So, two types of interviews were conducted: Phase 1: unstructured interviews and Phase 2: semi-structured interviews. So, The pilot fieldwork focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying the first participants Improving interviewer's technique Identifying matters of methodology and reflexivity Refining the study problem and sub-problems

Source: This table includes material from and Lincoln and Guba (1985), Hennik (2011) and Bernard (2013)

4.2.3. Method development and Data collection

The pilot study data was collected over a period of three weeks, between the dates of 3th March, 2014, to 24th March, 2014, utilising the selected methods presented in Table 6. Participant observations, casual conversations and unstructured interviews with open-ended questions were employed. The primary goal of the pilot study was to assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of the chosen research methods and help refine, narrow down and further focus the study problem and its sub-problems. So, the researcher made arrangements to travel from Luton (the researcher's place of residence during her PhD programme at the University of Bedfordshire) to Sofia (her home city) to carry out the first phase of the fieldwork. The data collection methods that proved most appropriate were casual conversations, and unstructured interviews. The following sections proceed to reveal the development and formation of the methods and their application.

Participant observations

The total time participant observations were carried out cannot be estimated, however, the process of observing a group of potential study participants commenced from the very first day of the researcher's stay in Sofia, when she arranged to meet with some of her friends to talk about future interview arrangements, in addition to catching up. The descriptive observations' aim was to describe the participants, their behaviour and the events that took place in order to provide rich conceptuality to the problem. Spradley (1980) cited in Robson (2011:325), distinguishes nine dimensions, which guided the researcher's narrative account during observation:

Space: Layout of the physical setting; rooms, outdoor spaces, etc.

Actors: The names and relevant details of the people involved

Activities: The various activities of the actors.

Objects: Physical elements, furniture etc.

Acts: Specific individual actions.

Events: Particular occasions, e.g., meetings

Time: The sequence of events.

Goals: What actors are attempting to accomplish.

Feelings: Emotions in particular contexts.

At first, the researcher attempted recording what she saw, following the dimensions listed above on the spot, using field notes. This technique proved futile, as this inhibited the normal behaviour of the group (the first time the researcher meets with four of her friends for dinner, at the very beginning of the pilot study phase) as the researcher kept going back and forth to the bathroom to scribble in her journal. As this technique interfered with the natural dynamic of the group's communication, the researcher decided to record the observation as soon as feasibly possible, later in her own home. This in turn, had an effect on the number of items recalled in relation to the overwhelming complexity of the surroundings and the number of observed occasions. Nevertheless, the early attempts of participant observations, led the researcher to the conclusion that a more subjective method, which is inherently more epistemologically significant, should be utilised to aid the understanding of Sofian women's leisure. Participant observations were initially used as a supportive, complementary method, but were eventually dismissed because of its inherent *reactivity* (McCall, 1984:273), which did not serve the purpose of the study. For instance, on one hand, the technique of being a completely detached, objective observer was perceived by the participants (and the researcher as well) as artificial, antisocial behaviour, as the researcher sat silent and did not take part in the conversation. On the other hand, the technique of being fully involved, participant observer was also inappropriate (as described above) which, again, resulted in disruption of the natural communication and dynamics of the group. Finally, due to time limitations, and financial resource matters, prolonged observations were not possible. Consequently, the personal narrative was identified as a more suitable way to describe and interpret the meanings of Sofian women's leisure and work vis-à-vis the Bulgarian socio-culture as it involves not only description of observation, but the researcher's biography, related bias, inherent cultural assumptions and experiences. Chapter 5 presents the researcher's accounts of her experience in the field in the form of personal narrative. Appendix 18 shows an extract from researcher's pilot study observations.

Casual conversations

In the previous chapter, the rationale for utilising casual conversations as a method of empirical data collection was presented. In the pilot study stage, the researcher utilised the themes examined in detail in Chapter 3, section 3.6, as this method proved to be a relevant source of information and this technique was not changed in the main phase unlike participant observations because it produced relevant for the study problem information. Appendix 19 presents an extract from researcher's casual conversations record.

Unstructured interviews

Face-to-face, unstructured interviews were identified as an appropriate method to explore issues of women's leisure and work. Minichiello *et al.* (1990) defined them as interviews in which neither the question nor the answer categories are predetermined. Saunders *et al.* (2000) suggests that this method is useful if the purpose of research is to discover why individuals make certain decisions or hold particular view or opinions. Understanding women's leisure problematics was central to the research inquiry at this point, so face-to-face interviews with the three women, were carried out to gain insight into their everyday worlds, and possibly uncover issues on which to focus the investigation further. Another reason for using this particular unstructured approach, at this stage, as opposed to a semi-structured one is because of their advantage of flexibility, which allows for a detailed description of lived experiences, and may uncover past experiences, which may affect the participant's views (Broom, 2005; Robson, 2011).

As this is an emergent study with an exploratory nature, the researcher identified areas of interest and designed a research agenda as an interview guide. Because of the flexibility of this approach, the researcher plays a critical role as she generate questions in response to the context and to move the conversation in a direction of the study focus (Minichiello *et al.*, 1990). This process is consistent with the emergent design of the study and its feminist methodology. It was done on one hand, in order to address the research problem and sub-

problem, and on the other to explore and be mindful of new emerging ideas or issues that might arise from the process of communication with the informants. The interview template for the pilot study consisted of background/demographic related questions, for revealing 'past experiences', 'views/opinions', and 'knowledge', as advised by (Byrne, 2004). The open-ended unstructured interviews featured questions such as: 'Tell me about yourself?'; 'Who is (participant's name)?' and 'What is the most important thing in your life right now?'. In addition, women were asked about their adolescent years in school and their past leisure practice, choices and experiences. Refer to Appendix 20 for the interview template and agenda. Furthermore, Appendix 21 presents an excerpt from an unstructured interview with one of the pilot study participants. As discussed above, the interview guide was prepared on the bases of the problematic areas of women's lives identified by the literature and based on the assumptions adopted by the researcher, shown in Appendix 2.

4.2.4 Analysis and interpretation of findings from Phase 1: Pilot Study

The data analysis procedure used to analyse the collected materials is thematic coding analysis. A detailed account of the process of data analysis and interpretation was examined in detail in Chapter 3, section 3.8. The emerging themes, sub-themes, and related categories were derived, revisited and evaluated by the researcher during the pilot study phase and during the subsequent analysis. In addition, the transcribed interviews were sent by email back to the participant to read and check for inaccuracies and misinterpretations. Once the informants confirmed the researcher's transcription to be truthful, and any misinterpretations corrected, thematic coding was carried out by the researcher using the qualitative data analysis software NVivo 11, as previously stated. As the researcher did the transcribing and translation from Bulgarian to English herself, it was felt necessary for the informants to confirm the Bulgarian transcriptions to minimise the chance of possible misconception and misunderstanding of the written data. The casual conversations and the observations were transcribed mainly from memory and from firework notes written in the

researcher's research diary. The unstructured interviews were recorded with a digital audio-recording device after the interviewee granted explicit permission.

In this section, an example of the thematic analysis and interpretation of findings is included to exemplify the improvements and modifications of the emergent design. Table 7, Table 8 and Table 9 show examples of the themes and categories derived from the analysis of the pilot study data. Segments of text are used to demonstrate each main themes, their related sub-themes and categories. These are quotations shown in single spaced, italicised text, with the anonymised name (in brackets) of the interviewee to whom a particular quote is attributed. The structure of presentation follows the research sub-problems, starting with Table 7 illustrating Sub-problem 1: the interrelationship of work and leisure; then Table 8 showing Sub-problem 2: Gender power relations within Sofian society; and finally, Table 9 shows themes related to Sub-problem 3: Leisure as identity creation and self-express.

Table 7: Thematic analysis and particular examples related to Sub-problem 1

Main Theme	Sub-themes and related category (numbered)	Particular examples
Work and leisure	<p><u>Women's own conceptualisations of leisure</u></p> <p>Defining leisure as sense of freedom</p> <p>Defining leisure as escape from routine and responsibility</p> <p>Leisure as socialising</p> <p>'Partying' is a central/ core leisure activity</p> <p>Continuity of leisure habits in the life course</p>	<p><i>'I decide for myself what I want to do, or sometimes what I don't want to do.'</i> (Silvia)</p> <p><i>'I love going out with my friends and hang out, it doesn't really matter what we do...I don't have a hobby or a passion for something....'</i> (Milena)</p> <p><i>'I'm sick of that, sometimes I just want to do whatever I want, whenever I want, without caring for anyone or anything else.'</i> (Silvia)</p> <p><i>'I love meeting new people and being surrounded by a lot of friends. Now, that I think about it, I'm an absolute party animal, I love going out and going to parties. I've done it all my life...'</i> (Yana).</p> <p><i>'Well, when I was a teenager I loved listening to old school hip-hop and rap music and going to parties. I still do, of course.'</i> (Milena)</p>
	<p><u>Work is both an obligation and a necessity</u></p> <p><u>Work is central to women's lives</u></p> <p><u>Conflicting roles of work and leisure</u></p>	<p><i>'I have no choice, I have to work and sometimes I hate it, but I wouldn't have it any other way, I like my job and I like having financial independence.'</i> (Yana)</p> <p><i>'Work is very important for me at the moment. I don't know whether it's going to stay that way in the future...and I don't have another major thing that would come first either so...'</i> (Silvia)</p>
	<p><u>Women's interpretation of their financial well-being:</u></p> <p>Work as an expression of status and identity</p> <p>Work as personal power</p>	<p><i>'I earn enough money to get by and have a normal life. I remember when I was younger and I had no money and I wanted to do all sorts of things but didn't have the cash...it sucked.'</i> (Silvia)</p> <p><i>'I've always wanted to work, to earn money. I'm a doer'</i> (Yana)</p> <p><i>'I've learned that earning money is hard but if you really enjoy your work and you aim at building a career that can be very satisfactory and powerful feeling, you know.'</i> (Milena)</p>
	<p><u>Work has a damaging effect on women's general well-being:</u></p> <p>Unregulated working hours</p> <p>Work overload</p> <p>Work is physically and mentally exhausting</p> <p>Exploitation</p> <p><u>Women are overburdened by work tend to disregard their well-being and personal health</u></p>	<p><i>'Before I started working for the company I now work in, I used to work other full-time jobs with fixed work hours from 9 am to 5 pm, but now we are so busy that my social life is suffering cause I stay late at the office all the time. Before I used to go out every day, except, say, Thursday and Sunday and now I go out only at the weekends'.</i> (Milena)</p> <p><i>'During the week, after work I usually have dinner and immediately go to bed, I just don't have strength left for anything else.'</i> (Yana)</p> <p><i>'During the week, I try to relax after work; mostly at home because I'm just too exhausted to do anything else....still, if I have some physical strength left, I would meet with friends because this is what makes me happy...'</i> (Silvia)</p> <p><i>'They exploit you. They take from you, but do not give back in return.'</i> (Silvia)</p>

Source: Author's work

Table 8: Thematic analysis and particular examples related to Sub-problem 2

Theme	Sub-theme and related category (numbered)	Particular example
Socio-cultural gendered assumptions, values and practices	<u>Constraining role of Romantic relationships</u>	<p><i>'When I met my now ex-boyfriend Nasko, my social life ended. My mom used to call him 'the young grandpa', because all he wanted to do was stay at home and watch TV. So yeah, when we became a couple I stopped going out and this lasted for 3 years.'</i> (Yana)</p> <p><i>'We never went out with my girlfriends, or if we did it was for an hour or so, and then he would want to leave. So naturally, when we broke up, everything went back to the way it was before. We split up 5 years ago.'</i> (Yana)</p> <p><i>'My first year in university I met my ex-husband and I used to spend all my leisure with him.'</i> (Silvia)</p>
	<u>Perceptions about The family-career conflict</u> Expectations about gender roles Stereotypical gender roles Resistance to gender roles/norms, the ideology of self-sacrifice in the name of the family	<p><i>'I believe that you can always combine both (career and leisure). There are a lot of women who do it. My boss for instance has two kids and she is always the first one in the office and the last one to leave. I don't know how she does it...'</i> (Silvia).</p> <p><i>'Women are expected to cook and clean, but most of all to have children, that is what I think. I wonder, where it's written that a woman should necessarily have children. But that's society for you.'</i> (Milena)</p> <p><i>'To work, to marry and have children and be pretty.'</i> (Silvia)</p> <p><i>'Sometimes I feel pressure even from my mom, she's always on the go; always running around taking care of stuff, and she'd blame me for not having done the dishes or cleaned my apartment. I feel judged all the time. It's like I haven't done anything right, in her opinion.'</i> (Yana)</p>
	<u>Women's perceptions about equality</u> Women equal to men Exploitation <u>Prioritising work over personal needs</u>	<p><i>'I think that nowadays, women can be considered equal with men in professional aspect. I mean, we work and they work too.'</i> (Milena)</p> <p><i>'This is what I've learned so far in terms of work. You can still be successful and grow in a workplace without working yourself to the bone as I've done in the past. You must not disregard yourself and your personal needs. They exploit you here. They just want more and more from you, but don't give you anything in return'). I've left the office physically and mentally exhausted so many times...'</i> (Silvia)</p>
	Bohemian lifestyle Hedonism Party hard	<p><i>'Frankly speaking, I spend most of my salary on leisure. I had a chat with my colleagues at work the other day and we decided that our way of life is a bohemian one: we celebrate life, we cherish it, we go to the clubs, the bars the restaurants.'</i> (Milena)</p> <p><i>'I work so that I can afford leisure. I mean isn't that the one of the most important things. I'm so busy these days that all I want to do is to enjoy myself, weather with friends or with my boyfriend.'</i> (Yana)</p> <p><i>'I still party hard.'</i> (Silvia)</p>

Source: Author's work

Table 9: Thematic analysis and particular examples related to Sub-problem 3

Theme	Category and sub-category	Particular example
Identity and leisure (Continuity and change in the life course)	<p><u>Personal leisure history and background</u></p> <p>intersecting roles sequences</p> <p><u>Friendship as a prime site of leisure</u></p> <p><u>Leisure pursuits are highly valued for their general contribution to well-being which is regarded as essential</u></p>	<p><i>'Well, I still try to have a blast, every time I go out, especially with the girls, I still want to go out and go wild... I stay at home sometimes, but if I'm not too tired I would definitely go out.'</i> (Silvia)</p> <p><i>'If being with my friends is a hobby then that's my hobby because it's the one thing that makes me feel good. I don't cook or participate in any sport activity and I don't do scrapbooking.'</i> (Milena)</p> <p><i>'During the week I try to stay at home and rest, I'll get together with friends if I have some strength left, because this is what makes me happy. During the weekend I'd try to have as much fun as possible, go dancing or to a party. When the weekend comes, it's like a holiday. That's so important to me, if I don't go out, I'll go crazy.'</i> (Yana)</p>
	<p><u>Leisure activities</u></p> <p>Volleyball</p> <p>Snowboarding</p> <p>Park-related leisure activities</p> <p>4) Other forms of physical activities like classes: yoga, spinning, Pilates, etc.</p>	<p><i>'I mean I used to love playing volleyball, but I haven't played in years. I don't have the motivation I guess. After I've done all the household chores I just want to lie down and watch TV or just go to bed. Sometimes I wish I could just leave it all, but that's not how life works. (laughs)'</i> (Milena)</p> <p><i>'I snowboard. I'm not a pro, but I love it, and that's the most important thing, isn't it. I learned a few years ago and now I snowboard every winter as much as I can.'</i> (Yana)</p> <p><i>'I usually go for drinks after work in the park, or sometimes on a Friday when I've finished all the chores. It's what I do when the weather is good. My boyfriend does it all the time as well. He loves just sitting on a bench in the park and drinking beer. It's nice the first couple of times, but after a while I get bored and want to do something else.'</i> (Silvia)</p> <p><i>'I used to go to these classes, like yoga or spinning but I stopped. I do not know, I just can't get myself to start again. Maybe I should, I've gained a few kilos lately.'</i> (Silvia)</p>

Source: Author's work

4.2.5 Reflections from the pilot study

Throughout the pilot study fieldwork, the researcher used the research journal to write down her methodological decisions and reflect upon other related personal and practical dilemmas connected to the research process. The methodological logs centred upon data collection methods and refinement of the sub-problems. Regular entries were made to record casual conversations, dates, times and other occasions that the researcher deemed relevant to the research process. In particular, the researcher focused on self-reflexive accounts of her experience as a researcher and her encounters with the participants (refer to Chapter 5, section 5.2). The methodological entries were usually made after an encounter with the participant or a scheduled interview session. The personal logs were made daily, as the researcher carried out daily observations, had conversations and meetings with some of her friends and other potential participants. Below some of the issues and difficulties encountered arising from the pilot study are discussed. The first person narrative is used to exemplify the reflexive thought of the investigator.

Issues of interviewing friends: The inexperienced researcher

On 21st March at 7 pm, I visited my friend Milena at her home. Firstly, I thought it would be easy to interview her, because we knew each other from high school and never lost touch. We have been friends for quite a long time and we have shared experiences, feelings and thoughts. However, I felt a bit nervous and unprepared, as I realised I did not know much about her even though I consider her a good friend. Naturally, I thought it would be easy to ask her all types of questions and our conversation would produce food for thought and the communication would run smoothly. However, I quickly gathered that despite our long-standing friendship I did not feel comfortable asking her personal questions for fear of upsetting her. For example, I knew her father had passed away when she was a teenager but I did not know how long ago or in what circumstances, or if and how it affected her. Moreover, I thought that it would not be appropriate to ask her such questions now because I did not want to cause her emotional pain or make her to feel uncomfortable. Therefore, I

decided to avoid any questions related to her father's passing. Luckily for me, this grim topic has very little to do with the topic of leisure. It came up, when we were sitting comfortably in her bedroom and just talking about the past, before the actual interview took place. I realised after the interview was over that I must be able to ask questions like that and not feel uncomfortable or shy, because in the future it might be necessary. Apart from that, the conversation went smoothly, without tension and we talked in a friendly, honest manner. Her relaxed posture, clear and steady voice and body language indicated she was unsuspecting of me and answered truthfully and clearly.

Linguistic and translation issues

As the data collection is carried out in Bulgarian (source) language and translated into English (target) language, problems of linguistic character occurred. Temple and Young (2004) argue that translation dilemmas occur in qualitative research, which have representative and epistemological implications for the process and trustworthiness of research. In this part of the thesis, these issues are addressed starting with identifying the translation act and acknowledging the fact that the researcher and translator is one and the same person – the researcher herself. Some translation issues are out of the researcher's control as conceptual equivalence across languages is an 'unsolvable problem', Phillips (1960:291) argues. He points out that 'almost any utterance in any language carries with it a set of assumptions, feelings, and values that the speaker may or may not be aware of but that the field worker, as an outsider, usually is not' Phillips (1960:291). For instance, in Bulgarian academic literature and language the concept of 'leisure' (spelled in Cyrillic: 'свободно време', abbreviated: СВ) denotes primarily the 'free-time' part of the conceptualisation of the term in English. In fact, in Bulgarian literature, the term 'бюджет на времето'(БТ) or 'time budget' (TB) is primarily associated with the term leisure and it is defined by how much time a person or a group of people spend in a day, week, month, or year for a particular activity. The 'time budget' term includes the interconnection and interaction of all human activities that are being done in a period of time. Most scholars

classify these interactions and social activities in five broad categories: work time; after work time; times spent in work-related activity/interaction; time spent at home or doing housework; satisfaction of personal and physiological needs. This means that the concept have been perceived mainly from a quantitative perspective, as an amount of time that can be measured and have predominantly positive connotation. Moreover, the gender dimension is also ignored. Therefore, the process of gaining comparability of meanings in this case is greatly facilitated by the researcher (in this case also the translator) having not only 'a proficient understanding of a language' but also, as Frey (1970) puts it, an 'intimate' knowledge of the culture. Only as an insider, can the researcher pick up the full implications that the term leisure carries for the women under investigation and make sure that the cultural connotations of such a word are made explicit to the readers.

4.2.6 Changes made after Phase 1: Conduct of Pilot Study

In the previous section, issues associated with interviewing friends and translation dilemmas were examined. In the present sub-section, the modifications made to the main study problem and sub-problems and the respective modifications made to the research design consequently are discussed

Changes made to the study problem and sub-problems

Following the analysis of the pilot study findings above, the study problem and sub-problems were revised and formulated in their present form exhibited in Chapter 1, section 1.3. In view of this change, the methods of data collection were revisited too in order to address the problem and sub-problems in an appropriate manner.

Changes made to the data collection methods

As already mentioned in Chapter 3, section 3.4 the methods used for data collection in the main study phase are casual conversations, semi-structured interviews and autoethnography.

Changes made to the unit of analysis

In order to focus and delimit the investigation the researcher identified a single unit of analysis: the individual person. In the beginning of the study, following Kelly's theoretical framework that addresses both the macro and micro levels of analysis was chosen. However, after the pilot study was finished the researcher concluded that this type of analysis did not fit the purpose of this research study: it is too abstract and moves from one level of analysis to another, making the data comparisons difficult (Kelly, 1987) and uncomprehensive. As this is contrary to this study's purpose, the researcher decided to abandon this dialectical approach and focus more on individual interpretations and understanding of leisure and work meanings in order to delimit the investigation to the micro level.

Changes made to the sampling approach

The research sample in the pilot study comprised of three Sofian women, all of whom were previously known to the researcher; in their youth and middle age (two of them 27 years old and one 30 years of age); all three had different jobs and similar material circumstances at the time the pilot study took place. For the main study, no changes were made to the sampling criteria, only the relationship between participants and researcher varied from friendly acquaintances to close friends.

4.3 Phase 2: Conduct of Main Study

4.3.1 Sampling Procedure

In view of the changes considered after the pilot study phase, the main study sample was extended to include women with children and women in same sex relationships. This was done in order to uphold the principles of non-marginalisation and equality that the researcher adheres to. The sample for the main study comprises of 15, generation Y women, born and raised in Sofia, age 20 to 39. In the pilot study phase, the researcher used social media (e.g., Facebook) to recruit participants, which proved a useful and easy tool to initiate contact. In the main study, initially, 20 women were targeted. The researcher sent personal online invitations to all of them along with consent forms and information about the research in accordance with the ethical conduct code (Refer to Appendix 22 for the main study consent letter form). Of the initial 20 women, 15 agreed to take part in the study, the other five refused for different reasons: four did not reply at all; one had moved abroad and expressed no desire to participate. The degree to which the researcher already knew each participant varied. Some are her long-standing friends and some, simply acquaintances. Table 10 presents the profile of the participants and their relationships with the researcher. The problematics of researching friends and acquaintances were already examined in the pilot study. To adhere to the ethical practice of confidentiality and anonymity, the researcher used pseudonyms to refer to the informants. In contrast with the pilot study, where only one individual was considered a close friend, in the main study phase, the degree of closeness, trust and intimacy between the researcher and participants varied. The researcher's perceptions of the relationships are presented below. For the purpose of the investigation, she identified the following three categories:

- *A long-standing acquaintance but not close friend* – Generally speaking, a person the researcher knows for a long time (at least 10 years), usually becoming acquainted through a mutual friend, but not a person with whom important personal or sensitive

information is shared. However, a certain feeling of camaraderie, respect and rapport exists between the two parties.

- *A long-standing close friend of the researcher* – Generally speaking, a person with whom the researcher shares experiences, feelings, thoughts and opinions, and seeks counsel when in need. The relationship is based on mutual trust, respect and understanding.
- *A former close friend of the researcher* – Generally speaking, a person who was once considered a close friend but during the fieldwork considered more of an acquaintance. During the life course both parties grew apart for various reasons, however did not lose touch completely and maintained a polite but impersonal communication.

In summary, both long-standing acquaintances and long-standing friends seemed enthusiastic about the study and expressed sincere desire to take part, believing in the integrity of the researcher and her intentions to offer an insights into the meanings of work and leisure for Sofian women. However, during an interview with one of the researcher's former close friends, the investigator sensed that the particular person was not taking the interview seriously and her behaviour was interpreted by the researcher as an attempt to undermine the importance of the work, even mock it. This particular instance is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, section 5.3.

Table 10: Demographic characteristics of Main Study participants

Participant Pseudonym	Age	Occupation	Marital status / relationship status	Relationship to the researcher
Ivanka	28	Investigative police officer	Unmarried/ engaged to be married	A former close friend of the researcher
Svetlana	27	Media analyst in a foreign-owned company.	Unmarried/ single	Long-standing acquaintance, but not a close friend
Angelia	27	HR administrative assistant	Unmarried/ in a relationship	Long-standing close friend of the researcher
Maya	27	Architect	unmarried/ in a relationship	Long-standing acquaintance, but not a close friend
Anna	28	PR expert	nmarried/ in a relationship	Long-standing close friend of the researcher
Daniela	29	Attorney-at-law	Unmarried/ in a relationship	Long-standing close friend of the researcher
Tanya	29	PR account manager	Unmarried/ single	Long-standing acquaintance, but not a close friend
Boyana	33	Communications manager	Unmarried/ single	Long-standing acquaintance, but not a close friend
Savina	28	Administrator for a construction firm	Unmarried/ single	Long-standing acquaintance, but not a close friend
Kalina	27	Order manager in an IT firm	Unmarried/ single	Long-standing acquaintance, but not a close friend
Sasha	28	PR and advertisement consultant	Unmarried/ in relationship	A former close friend of the author
Nikol	29	Sales expert in an electricity providing company	Unmarried/ in a relationship	Long-standing acquaintance, but not a close friend
Viktoria	31	Project management assistant at an IT company	Unmarried/ single	Long-standing acquaintance, but not a close friend
Maria	29	A solicitor/legal advisor	Unmarried/ single	A former close friend of the author
Paula	30	Office manager	Divorced/ in a relationship	Long-standing close friend of the researcher

Source: Author's work

Overall, the response rate was relatively high. However, the researcher had trouble in arranging meetings with most of the women, as they had busy schedules and although they

expressed desire to participate in the study almost all arranged meetings had to be rescheduled.

4.3.2 Process of Data Collection

The data from the main study was collected over a period ranging from 8th February, 2015, to 1st July, 2015, in Sofia using semi-structured interviews, casual conversations and autoethnography as methods. The researcher succeeded in carrying out all interviews in the first three months; however, she stayed in Sofia in order to carry out follow-up meetings with participants to discuss the interview transcripts and address questions the participants had in relation to the study. Furthermore, during her stay in Sofia she carried out personal reflections about her relationship with the participants, the research project and the emerging interpretations, which she wrote down in the research journal (see Chapter 5, sections 5.3 and 5.4).

All women were visited in their homes at dates and times convenient to them. The semi-structured interviews were carried out usually after work or during the weekend. The aim of the main study fieldwork was to gather data in order to produce rich descriptions of woman's everyday lives. In addition to the modifications made to the methods of data collection, the researcher utilised bricolage and crystallisation as principles of data collection. This section of the thesis continues to examine the development of the methods and their appropriateness to investigate women's leisure and work meanings.

Semi-structured interviews

During the main study phase, 15 Sofian women were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. The themes and questions for the interview template were revised after the pilot study in accordance with the revised sub-problems (see Appendix 10 for the revised semi-structured interview script). All 15 interviews were audio-recorded after explicit consent was granted by the interviewees. The interview sessions varied from an hour to an hour and a half. After each session, the researcher listened to and transcribed the audio-recording at

her home and noted emergent themes or issues (Appendix 23 features an excerpt from a transcribed and translated interview). The process of member checking included sending the transcribed interviews to the women and asking them to confirm the written text. The researcher encouraged them to ask questions in relation to the research. All of the interviewees were content with the transcripts and only asked for a concise summary of the findings after the research project was completed.

Casual conversations

Similarly to the pilot study phase, the casual conversations took place mainly before and after the interview sessions and during regular meetings the researcher had with some of the participants during her stay in Sofia (mostly conversations with her long-standing girlfriends, as the interaction with them was more natural and frequent). The researcher noted as much relevant information as possible in the researcher's journal during the fieldwork period. Incidentally, a leisurely trip to the seaside (described in Chapter 5, section 5.3.1) provided the researcher with the opportunity to reflect on and record some communication relevant to the investigation and this is included in Chapter 5. On another occasion, the researcher attempted to steer the conversation into a direction relevant to the study (using the predetermined themes presented in Chapter 3, section 4.3.1); however, this attempt proved unnecessary as the spontaneous discussion revolved around these themes as part of women's everyday lives, anyway. All conversations were in Bulgarian and subsequently transcribed and translated into English as soon as possible. The researcher found casual conversations to be very useful in producing rich data from a single conversation, however, the task of recalling and transcribing the conversations proved a difficult and complex task, as the amount of information is great and the tasks of simultaneous listening, documenting and interpreting puts an emotional strain on 'the researcher-as-an-instrument'.

Personal narrative

As Denzin (2014:vii) states 'the challenge is to develop a methodology that allows us to examine how the private troubles of individuals are connected to public issues and to public responses to these troubles'. The researcher attempted to address this challenge by engaging in autoethnography. Thus, she commenced her reflexive and self-reflexive practice from the very beginning of the investigation, in order to account for her inherent biases and cultural situatedness. However, during the pilot study phase it became clear that traditional ethnographic methods are not subjective and personal enough to explore the complexities of Sofian women's leisure and their multiple meanings. So, the researcher came to know and embrace autoethnography as a means of presenting her 'past' self and present 'self' and the interchanging dimensions of her personal life and leisure. Chapter 5 is entirely dedicated to the researcher's journey as a woman, a feminist and as an investigator.

The process of writing her own self-narrative started during the pilot study phase and ended after the final interpretation of the findings. The researcher found the method difficult as it requires a great deal of vulnerability and courage to display the most personal thoughts to the rest of the world. She also notes her inexperience in writing such kind of narrative. Nevertheless, the researcher's aim is to convey, as clearly as possible, the meanings attached to the lived experiences through the narration and evoke a feeling of empathy and understanding within the readers. For example, the next chapter describes the leisure practices that the researcher engages in as her personal form of self-identification.

4.3.3 Principles of data collection and analysis

In the previous chapter, the researcher examined the principles of bricoleurship and crystallisation that inform this research process, the data analysis and interpretation processes and knowledge production. Here, the principles are demonstrated and the ways they are integrated into the process of research is examined. The challenges and difficulties faced by the investigator are presented as well.

Bricoleurship

In this study, bricolage is demonstrated not only through the multiple qualitative methods but through the melange of philosophical and theoretical notions relevant to the research act itself (Kincheloe, 2001). This includes the researcher's personal skills and intellectual power to make interpretive judgements and associations over the course of the research and through the data analysis. This process is established in the main study through the researcher's commitment to the view that 'any object of inquiry is inseparable from its context, the language used to describe it, its historical situatedness in a larger on-going process, and the socially and culturally constructed interpretations of its meaning(s).' (Kincheloe, 2001:5). Thus, rigour is demonstrated through the researcher's ability to think dialectically and critically about the disciplinary processes of research and her careful exploration of the relationships connecting the object of inquiry (women's leisure) to the context in which it exists.

Throughout the research process the investigator faced a number of difficulties by engaging in bricoleurship. As this approach advocates multiperspectivity and interdisciplinarity (Kinchelo, 2001, 2005), it is a highly complex and demanding task that requires a detailed knowledge of multiple disciplines and perspectives, which requires a lifetime commitment on the researcher's part. Consequently, the researcher struggled to avoid the monological, disciplinary knowledge through the bricolage (Kinchelo, 2005), as a doctoral programme is insufficient time to acquire in-depth understanding of multitude of disciplinary fields and develop expertise in multiple methodologies. Nevertheless, the researcher adopted the approach in an attempt to acquaint herself with the social-theoretical and hermeneutical understandings and assumptions of feminism, leisure theory and sociology in order to address the research problem in a non-reductionist, one-dimensional way. Still, the researcher understands the complexity of the bricolage and acknowledges her own limited knowledge of the approach as an academic-in-training.

Crystallisation

In the previous chapter, the rationale for choosing crystallisation over triangulation as the means of establishing trustworthiness of the study was established. Here, a more detailed account of how the data collected were crystallised upon using the approach. The main contribution of crystallisation to this research project is in the integration of methods and the epistemological basis on which the researcher makes knowledge claims. For instance, crystallisation was particularly useful in interpreting the multiple perspectives of reality and the ways of representation across the continuum of qualitative methods (Ellingson, 2009). This case study combines traditional forms of analysis (traditional thematic coding approach) and more artistic genres of representation and interpretation (narratives of self and others) (Ellingson, 2009) that the crystallisation approach facilitates. Figure 3 illustrates the qualitative continuum. The bold and underlined positions show the inquiry within the left and middle side of the continuum based on the research goal, methods, writing, the position of the researcher, the particular vocabulary and the trustworthiness criteria.

Figure 3: Qualitative Continuum

Qualitative Continuum		
Art/Impressionist	Middle-ground approaches	Science/Realist
Goals:		
<u>To unravel accepted truths</u> <u>To construct personal truths</u> To explore the specific To generate art	<u>To construct situated knowledges</u> To explore the typical <u>To generate description and understanding</u> To trouble the taken-for-granted To generate pragmatic implications for participants	To discover objective truth To generalise to larger population To explain reality 'out there' To generate scientific knowledge To predict and control behaviour
Questions:		
How can we cope with life? What other ways can we imagine? <u>What is unique about my or another's experience?</u>	How do participants understand their world? How do participants and author co-create a world? What are the pragmatic implications of research?	What does it mean from researcher's point of view What is the relationship among factors What behaviours can be predicted
Methods:		
<u>Autoethnography</u> <u>Interactive interviewing</u> Participant observations Performance Sociological introspection Visual arts	<u>Semi-structured interviews</u> Focus groups <u>Participant observation/ethnography</u> <u>Thematic, metaphoric and narrative analysis</u> Grounded theory <u>Case Study</u> Historical/archival research	Coding textual data Random sampling Frequencies of behaviours Measurement Surveys Structured interviews
Writing:		
<u>Use of first person voice</u> Literally techniques <u>Stories</u> Poetry/poetic transcription Multivocal, multigenre texts Layered accounts <u>Experimental forms</u> <u>Personal reflections</u> Open to multiple interpretations	<u>Use of first person voice</u> <u>Incorporation of brief narratives in research reports</u> <u>Use 'snippets' of participant's words</u> Using a single interpretation, with implied partiality and positionality <u>Some consideration of researcher's standpoint(s)</u>	Use of passive voice Claim single authoritative interpretation Meaning summarised in tables and charts Objectivity and minimisation of bias highlighted
Researcher:		
<u>Researcher as the main focus, or as much the focus of research as other participants</u>	Participants are main focus, but researcher's positionality is key to the forming findings	Researcher is presented as irrelevant to results
Vocabulary:		
<u>Artistic/interpretive: inductive, personal, ambiguity, change, process, creativity, concrete detail, evocative experience</u>	<u>Social Constructionist/Postpositivist:</u> emergent, thick description, themes, co-creation of meaning	<u>Positivist:</u> deductive, tested, axioms, measurement, variables, control, generalisability, validity, reliability
Criteria:		
<u>Do stories ring true, resonate, engage, and move? Are they coherent, plausible, interesting, aesthetically pleasing</u>	<u>Clarity and openness of processes</u> <u>Evidence of researcher's reflexivity</u>	Authoritative rules Specific criteria for data, similar to quantitative Prescribed methodological process

Source: Ellingson (2009:8)

4.3.4 Data analysis

The data analysis procedure used to analyse the meanings of Sofian women's leisure and work during the main study fieldwork is thematic coding analysis. Once again, the data collected through the qualitative methods and was analysed by the researcher using the NVivo 11 qualitative analysis software. The data was transcribed, translated and e-mailed to the participants for conformation, comments and related questions. A couple of emails were not replied to (three in total) so, the researcher assumed that the respondents were not interested in confirming the transcript and she interpreted the lack of response as a sign of their desire to terminate their involvement in the research study. The rest of the informants seemed satisfied with the transcripts and expressed desire to learn more about the findings in their reply emails to the researcher. Once this process was finalised, the final interpretations of findings commenced. The problematics of transcribing and translating have already been discussed.

4.4 Research Ethics

In the main study, the author continued to refer to both the British Sociological Association's 'Statement of ethical practice' (BSA, 2002) and the National Association of Social Workers' 'Code of Ethics (NASWCE, 2008), as she did during the pilot study fieldwork (see Appendix 14). However, despite the good intentions of the researcher and her desire to give voice to others, matters of representation remained significantly challenging. As a feminist she acknowledged the danger of being tempted to speak for others as an expert on their lives. Thus, the ethics of representation in this feminist research is concerned with the ways in which the meanings of Sofian women's leisure and work are interpreted and represented and the impact the findings have in the real world. So, in order to address these issues, the investigator engages in juxtaposing the 'multiple and competing' account, as advised by Preissle and Han (2012). This way, rather than trying to reflect the 'truth' in a traditional, positivist way, the researcher herself becomes an instrument of emancipation or intervention as advocated by Ellingson (2009).

Furthermore, Stacey (1988) warns about the danger of ethnographic research, in which the appearance of greater respect for and equality with research subjects masks, a deeper, more dangerous form of exploitation. She found that the greater the intimacy, the greater is the danger. In this study, some of the participants are the researcher's friends and the investigator possesses intimate knowledge of their lives, thus the relationship between researcher and researched is particularly challenging because some of the informants may feel disappointment, alienation or potential exploitation, if the researcher makes use of this information. So, the investigator attempted to mitigate these possibilities by keeping the names of participants confidential and by explaining the feminist research process as clearly as possible to them, so they can understand their role in the creation of knowledge. This issue and related problematics are examined in detail in Chapter 5, section 5.3.

4.5 Matters of Validity and Reliability

The criterion of establishing trustworthiness of this feminist case study has already been discussed in section 3.10 in relation to validity and reliability problematics. This research project utilised the trustworthiness criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). These criteria comprise demonstrating credibility, transferability, dependability, conformability and authenticity. Credibility is exemplified through a prolonged and intense exploration and interrogation of the self/others relationship (Harrison *et al.*, 2001), self-reflexivity (research journal), crystallisation and member checking. Transferability as the 'interpretive equivalent' to generalisability (Harrison *et al.*, 2001:277) is not the aim of this inquiry, as previously discussed. However, the finding seeks to provide thick, rich description of the phenomenon and insights into the studied setting. Dependability is established by self-auditing and crystallisation. Finally, conformability is ensured by the reflexive and autoethnographic practice of the researcher.

4.6 Summary of the Chapter: Conduct of fieldwork

This chapter presented the conduct of the pilot study and the main study stages of this research inquiry. By conducting pilot fieldwork, the researcher implemented the first stage of the case study's flexible design that allowed her to address and overcome methodological and epistemological issues for the main study phase. In the main study, issues of narrowing down the focus of research and refining the main study problem and sub-problems were resolved. Moreover, changes were made to the unit of analysis and the methods of empirical data collection based on reflections from the preliminary fieldwork. The autoethnographic strategy was also utilised in order to produce a descriptive account of the researcher's personal biases and emic/etic positionality. The research methodology utilised during fieldwork proved effective data-gathering strategy for investigating the leisure and work meanings of Sofian women. Thus, the research epistemological and methodological underpinnings may be used in future studies to investigate other leisure-related issues of Bulgarian women.

The research methods presented in this chapter were subject to change based on the preliminary fieldwork carried out by the researcher in order to address issues of appropriateness of data-gathering techniques, the researcher's positionality and matters of relationship between the researcher and participants. The changes made after the pilot study fieldwork included: a) changes made to the main data collection methods: participant observations were rejected and personal narrative was used as a better way to relate the autobiographical and personal to the social, cultural and political (Ellingson, 2009); b) changes were made to the theoretical underpinnings of the main study: Kelly's (1987) framework of leisure theories was abandoned in favour of the feminist methodology and the principles of bricolage and crystallisation; c) changes were made to the unit of analysis: the individual person was chosen as the unit of analysis; d) the study problem and related sub-problems were revisited and reformulated in their present format. These changes were

consistent with the emergent design chosen to carry on the investigation. Throughout the fieldwork, the researcher adhered to the ethical code of research conduct.

Chapter 5: Researcher's Reflexivity and Autoethnographic Accounts

5.1 Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter presents the reflexive account of the researcher who has been investigating individuals with whom she shares a common nationality, place of residence, normative socio-culture and common worlds of gender inequality. Through this autobiographical, reflexive account she locates herself in the study by scrutinising her emic/etic position throughout the research process and fieldwork and elucidates her choice of research topic. In addition, this chapter features the autoethnographic technique of personal narrative, adopted by the researcher, which aims to illustrate the ambiguous link between the author's private world, experiences and multiple identities (as a researcher, a Bulgarian woman, a feminist, a friend, etc.) and the socio-cultural milieu in which the project has taken place. This chapter illustrates the relationship between personal experience and specific socio-cultural setting. Through the technique of personal narrative the researcher examines the relationship between her personal experiences and the process of conducting feminist leisure research. This chapter is written in the first person to reflect the position of the 'I' in this qualitative inquiry.

5.1.1 Locating the Researcher

The researcher's background

I was born in Sofia in the winter of 1985. At that time my parents had been married for three years and were living in a small, one-bedroom apartment in the outskirts of the city. The flat was provided by the council as the young family was eligible to buy a state-owned property in accordance with the social policy at the time. The happy couple was among the lucky few to benefit from this policy, as a scarcity of urban properties existed throughout Bulgaria and within Sofia in particular, as a result of the rapid industrialization of the economy and collectivization of the agricultural sector after the war.

I was five years old when we moved into a similar but more spacious three-bedroom flat in Ovcha Kupel 1 (a residential neighbourhood situated in the western part of the capital in the foothill of Vitosha mountain), where I currently live with my mom. My primary school was situated 15 minutes away from home, so I rarely had an opportunity to explore the city. This quickly changed when I started high school at 16, in the year 2000. Although, I was not the most diligent of students I got accepted into High School 18th 'William Gladstone', (a public school, with an English language curriculum) which was generally considered a good public school and was situated in the city centre.

The educational system and me

Historically speaking, prior to the political changes of 1989, the educational system, which, generally attempted to introduce measures of social equality and mass educational opportunities, in accordance to the Soviet model (Silova and Eklof, 2012) was partially successful. However, it was also controlled solely by the intertwined party and centralist state administration, which turned education into a tool for legitimising the control of the party on ideological grounds (Silova and Ekof, 2012). The processes of overall democratisation and decentralisation that started after 1989 aimed to neutralize the excessive 'ideologisation' (predominantly in the social sciences and humanities) of Bulgarian secondary education and reform the state-owned (public) schools (Damianova-Ivanova, 1995) by initializing democratic reforms based on the liberal, capitalist Western policies. The Westernisation of the educational system and everyday life in general, had a profound effect on the nature and conceivably on people's leisure pursuits and experiences (Ghodsee, 2014). There were more opportunities for self-expression and personal freedom in all spheres of life, especially for my generation. As a 'child of democracy', I took it all for granted. At the time, I did not think about the past or the future, nor did I contemplate philosophical debates about gender equality and female empowerment. In retrospect, however, I recollect experiencing various forms of sexism and misogyny in the form of jokes, comments, behaviours and attitudes (some blatantly obvious, others more subtle) throughout my high school. Then, I did not

have the intellectual arsenal to recognise or label them as such. In fact, misogyny was (and I argue, still is) so deeply rooted in the everyday socio-cultural discourse that it has become the natural state of affairs and is difficult to detect and identify. All I knew was that education was free and the schools provided foreign language learning (primarily English, German, Spanish and French), which was considered essential for further education or for acquiring a comparative advantage in the capitalist labour market. I was young, impressionable and eager to learn, but most of all, I felt free to hang out with my friends and that was good enough for me. People were still getting into trouble for different reasons, but speaking ill against the leader, listening to the Beatles or wearing a short skirt was not among them.

For four years, I often played truant with no particular repercussions; I did poorly in the natural sciences but excelled in the social ones. I became an avid reader and developed an interest in Buddhist teachings and the discipline of social psychology. I listened to ska, reggae and ragga, rap and hip-hop music and had an affinity for the various sub-cultures and their rebellious means of expression like graffiti and street art. I was obsessed with the Britpop scene, the British rock music and style of the 1990s (Oasis, Blur, The Verve, and The Stone Roses), unlike some of my peers, who were more into American grunge (Nirvana and Pearl Jam). Typically for a post-totalitarian urban zone, in the 1990s and early 2000s, Sofia witnessed a rise of the various youth sub-cultures coming from both sides of the Atlantic. In the 1990s, skateboarding, snowboarding, BMX-ing and inline skating were beginning to enter Bulgarian popular culture and that's what me and my friends were into, especially the boys. Occasionally, we would hang out in the school backyard, smoke weed, or drink whatever alcohol we could afford (back then we could buy cigarettes or booze from every corner shop without even being asked for an ID). We could go to the parks, and nobody would bother us. We were just doing our thing, we weren't bothering anybody either. In the spring, we would skip school and hang out at a friend's cozy loft, sit on time-worn, wooden rocking chairs on the sunlit balcony, swing back and forth in self-indulgent reverie and listen to badly-composed mixtapes.

In retrospect, to me, school was more the beginning of my self-identification than a prelude to employment. I knew I was going to university afterwards, I just didn't know what I wanted to study and what kind of job I would pursue. I graduated from high school in 2004. In 2005, I started my undergraduate degree in English and American studies, both of which I found fascinating.

Researcher's professional biography

My professional biography centres mainly upon my academic background, which consequently influenced my choice of research topic. I completed my first degree in English and American Studies (Bachelor of Arts) at New Bulgarian University (Sofia, Bulgaria) and my postgraduate degree in International Tourism Management (Master of Sciences) at the University of Bedfordshire (United Kingdom). After my MSc in International tourism management, I decided to advance my academic career and further develop my interests in the field of leisure studies and matters of gender and discourses of feminism. I applied for a PhD research degree at the University of Bedfordshire and was accepted in 2013. The reason I submitted my application was because I was interested in leisure as a means of resistance and empowerment for women.

During my undergraduate studies, I was first introduced to the writings of women in British and American literature and their significance to feminism. During this period I developed a personal interest in feminist literary criticism, which in turn, sparked my academic interest in the history of the feminist movement and philosophy of women's struggle. At postgraduate level these interests gradually developed further into a PhD research project as I was introduced to the sociological theories of leisure and the feminist criticism of leisure scholars like Deem, Green and Wearing. At the beginning of my programme I began to familiarise myself with the works of the second wave feminists, subsequently, progressing to third wave authors, like Walker and Findlen, who utilise highly subjective, autobiographical perspectives in their writings. I felt a strong affiliation towards this type of highly personal and self-

reflective work, which, I believe, can help better understand the inequalities and challenges women face in everyday life by considering the diversity of women as well as their differences and similarities. Consequently, the highly self-reflexive, autobiographical narratives proposed by these scholars appealed to my female sensitivities and convictions and the purpose of the investigation.

Researcher's self-identification

In order to locate my identity at the beginning of the research journey I asked myself the question *who am I*. I reached a conclusion that I have many identities, which transpire in different contexts, i.e., at home or among friends and relatives, in my leisure. These identities include, my national identity, gender identity, marital status, age, education, family position and religious affiliation. I'm Bulgarian, a Sofian born and bred; a female, never married; in my early thirties, a daughter, a sister, a researcher, a Western European, an Eastern European, to name just a few. Some of these identities are assigned and some are assumed, but they are all interconnected and some of them changed through interaction with the participants. I have accepted selected expectations attached to my gender identity, but others I have rejected or resisted, which is also reflected in my motivation to investigate the meanings of Sofian women's leisure. For example, I am content with the biological sex I have been assigned to at birth (I am a female) but I object to some socially and culturally constructed gender roles and definitions of femininity, i.e., the social and cultural characteristics associated with being female (Barker, 2004), for instance, the still prevailing notion that women should be mothers and homemakers. As gender identity deeply affects every aspect of my life, including leisure, I reflect on the ways in which my personal leisure habits, experiences and style can be seen as resistance to such normative socio-cultural constructions of femininity and stereotypical gender roles. As a feminist, I believe in every woman's right to freely choose her leisure and I support her right to oppose and revolt against (if she chooses to) oppressive or constraining institutions through it. As an existentialist and idealist at heart I believe that one can truly be oneself in/through leisure.

Furthermore, I recognise the interrelationship between my multiple identities, i.e., the ones learned within the culture and the ones influenced by my primarily Western education and life abroad. Thus, the inspiration behind this study's research is greatly influenced by this vast spectrum of intra- and interpersonal and social conflicts that is here reflected through the researcher's own autoethnographic narrative. My definitions and grasp of the personal and social identities are explored further in view of the insider/outsider positions in the research study.

The following sections consider my reflexive accounts pre and during the pilot study phase, during Phase 2: (conduct of main study fieldwork) and post-research reflexivity (after conduct of fieldwork). For the purpose of self-reflection, I kept a research journal, in which I recorded information about meetings with participants, interpreted reactions, thought and feelings, personal contemplations and difficulties that occurred throughout the research fieldwork. The journal was a safe place for me to consider the influence of my identities on the research and the way they affect my position as 'insider outsider'. In the next section, I present extracts from my journal to exemplify these dilemmas.

5.2 Researcher's Reflexivity before and during Phase 1: pilot study

'Who in the world am I? Ah, that's the great puzzle.'

Lewis Carroll

Before embarking on the quest to gather empirical data for the research study I realised that all of my identities (personal and social) are far more complex, contradictory and interconnected than I have previously thought. In the pre-research phase I considered my 'insider' or emic position and my 'outsider' or etic positions in relation to the research problem. Subsequently, I wrote in my research journal the following:

...this is harder than I thought. When I think about 'who am I', I think about all the people and places that help form my identity. Yes, I'm woman, born in Sofia, researching other women, also born in Sofia, but what do I know about the problems of work and leisure when I have not been employed, previously

in my life? What do I think I know about Sofian women's leisure that needs to be investigated? What possible meanings can women's leisure choice have? I guess I just knew that I did not want to be like my mother, and I have the relative freedom to choose for myself, what I want to do with my life, without having to conform to society's expectations. However, it's not that simple. I've always challenged the normative assumptions of femininity in my own way. I guess, that is why I chose leisure as the arena of identity expression and resistance... (Author's personal diary entry: 12/04/2013)

Being 'of the culture' and cross-cultural hybridity

The decision to research individuals with whom I share the same nationality, place of residence and gender stems from my insider (emic) positions. As a Sofian woman I share with the study's participants a common language, national identity, gender and religious affiliation. These commonalities made me confident that being 'of the place and culture' would make the research process more unproblematic in terms of participant recruitment and sampling choice and would reduce the challenges of data analysis and interpretation. Being among my 'own' and most importantly being a Sofian woman, I fostered a feeling of empathy towards my fellow women (as I have witnessed how they struggle to maintain a work-life balance) and that is why in the pre-research stage I adopted an emic position. As an insider I wanted to focus the attention on the problematics of the work-leisure relationship and as a result raise the feminist consciousness of my sisters, 'start a revolution' in the name of personal empowerment through leisure, as only an insider could. However, at the beginning of the investigation I had some reservations about researching Sofian women from a feminist perspective, as I was suspicious of my own cultural competence, not to mention that I had not studied feminism(s) before I commenced my PhD programme nor done anything remotely feminist, in the 'mainstream' sense of the word. Regardless, I considered myself an insider (emic position), thus, I had a clear advantage when it comes to data interpretation and knowledge co-creation. The meaning of leisure for me was clearly, freedom of self-expression and resistance.

As an emerging researcher working in the field of leisure studies, I quickly realised the challenge of theorising individual leisure experiences and identities in relation to the ideological and discursive contexts of post-socialist Bulgaria. For instance, one such challenge arose from my own ambiguous hybrid position as a Bulgarian diaspora in the UK and as a feminist researcher. My own self-identification presented an issue in itself in two directions. Firstly, it challenges the notions of fixed identities and our sense of historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force (Bhabha, 1994). Secondly, it poses questions about the polarisations of the binary oppositions of Eastern/Western and self/other on an epistemological level. Here, I use the work of Bhabha (1983, 1985, 1990, 1992, and 1994) to refer to the concepts of hybridity, third space, ambivalence and mimicry in the context of my own reflection about culture, leisure and resistance. Bhabha's work within postcolonial studies is relevant to my reflexive, introspective writing as it defines, theorizes, and infuses notions of nationality, ethnicity and the politics of poststructuralist identity. In Bhabha's writings the notion of hybridity refers to the mixed-ness or even impurity of all cultures. Moreover, he states that in the case of cultural identities, hybridity refers to the fact that cultures are always in contact with one another and are always mixing (Bhabha, 1994). Furthermore, he describes the identity of diaspora people as an ambivalent state of mind where here is no longer a specific place or home but mixed feelings over the fact that nothing is stable anymore. In this sense, in Bhabha's (1994) view, when two or more cultures/individuals interact there will be an ambiguous area where they meet, which he calls the 'third space'. This hybrid third space is an ambivalent site where cultural meaning and representation have no 'primordial unity or fixity' (Bhabha, 1990). The hybrid identity is positioned within this third space, as 'lubricant' (Papastergiadis, 1997) in the conjunction of cultures. The hybrid's potential is with their innate knowledge of 'transculturation' (Taylor, 1991), their ability to transverse both cultures and to translate, negotiate and mediate affinity and difference within a dynamic of exchange and inclusion. They have encoded within them a counter-hegemonic agency.

My experience as a diaspora put me in an ambiguous state that Habra (1994) describes as 'a moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion'. When I started my Ph.D. program, I wanted to know who I really was, and I wanted to fit in and be accepted by my academic community and by my family and friends back home, as both a researcher and as a friend. Similarly to most of my peers, I wanted to experience the West; I wanted to verify all that I have learned in my English and American cultural studies courses. So, as I was packing my suitcases, romanticised, visions of democratic, economic prosperity circulated in my eager for adventure, knowledge and better life prospects mind. I had developed an infatuation with the West at the expense of my 'own' history, culture, and outlook, I have adopted the 'Western gaze', and my natural instinct was to blend in, to emulate the British-ness that I had learned through popular culture. Still, I wanted to exist in that third space, to be both an Easterner and a Westerner. I missed my family and friends and often traveled back to Bulgaria, during my studies. Most of all, I identify very strongly with the Sofian me - the party girl and the best friend. That's why in the beginning of my investigation the emic perspective appeared stronger, despite my internal, ambiguous self-identification.

Researching Sofian women in full-time employment

Even in my mindset as an insider, in the beginning, I struggled to pinpoint the main study questions as there are many intersecting dimensions of women's lives, which need to be investigated in order to better understand the meanings of women's leisure. That is why during the pilot study stage I decided to probe the complexities of my girlfriends' social and personal worlds, such as family, community and work and discover the most problematic areas. As previous leisure research has identified work as both a constraint and an enhancement (Henderson, 1996) I entered the field with firm, pre-conceived assumptions about work (and its centrality in women's lives) and as an outsider (etic). I considered only

the oppressive side of work: work overload and physical and mental exhaustion, without considering any positive aspects. I wrote the following in my research journal:

...I consider focusing the investigation on Sofian women in full-time employment, because I've personally observed the negative influence full-time employment has on women's lives, regardless of their, occupation. My mother was a perfect example of the effects of 'the double burden' upon women's well-being. I wonder how contemporary women perceive their 'double burden' and whether they recognize it as a barrier to leisure, in the changed post-transitional labor market...(Author's journal entry: 14/04/2013)

Thus, I set out to explore the leisure meanings of Sofian women in full-time employment, with the assumption that 'the devil makes work' (Clarke and Critcher, 1985), indeed. Work, I reckoned was the main constraint to women's leisure, and consequently to their self-expression and personal power. Nevertheless, as work, social relations (family, romantic relationships) and leisure form the basics of everyday life, it was clear to me that I should be exploring these aspects. As an outsider, and as an unemployed woman, I had not experienced the 'drudgery' of full-time employment, but I was sure of its 'oppressive' nature in relation to leisure. The next section is an account of my presence in the field and documents my initial experience as a researcher: 'a stranger among my own'.

5.2.1 Researcher's personal accounts of her experience in the field (phase 1: pilot study)

My personal leisure lifestyle and lived experiences are the starting point and inspiration behind this research project. The following sub-section is titled: *A Ladies Night: The Usual Suspects*, and present a detailed account of my initial presence in the field and my interaction with some of my close friends that would later on be included in the main study sample. In this section, my personal introspective observations and thoughts about the intersecting emic/etic positions during the encounters are presented.

'A Ladies Night: The Usual Suspects'

I arrived at Sofa airport at the usual time, round 4 am, on the 1th March, 2014, annoyed, jetlagged and slightly disoriented. A few days prior, I had coordinated a meeting with some of my girlfriends for dinner. I was excited to be home, I was anticipating the meeting with my friends, but I also had my research agenda in mind. It felt weird. So, two days later I was sitting comfortably at the table at 'Mr. Pizza' restaurant, feeling the warmth of the tasteless red wine spreading through my bloodstream and listening to my friend Angelia's story about how last Christmas she almost got tossed off a hotel balcony like a dirty rag doll, by a mutual acquaintance of ours, called Igor.

I meet Paula earlier that same day to catch up privately, before joining the rest of the girls for dinner. When we were children we used to be neighbours and we used to spend every possible moment together, sliding with ours sleighs in the winter and taking the dog for a walk round the concrete blocks of our neighbourhood. An ash-blond opinionated spitfire with fair completion and dark, cryptic eyes, Paula is quite short-tempered and is often in the habit of voicing her often radical worldviews and beliefs with brutal honesty, which is rarely appreciated by her family and friends. She is a firm supporter of the segregation of the Roma community and a pro-capital punishment advocate, to mention just a few. Despite having opposing views on the subject of equality, retribution and justice, her disposition being one of downright extremity, mine of emphatic moderation, we remained close friends. Sometimes she indulges herself with a drink or two during her lunch break and starts feeling sentimental. Then she would leave me messages on Facebook and Skype, saying how much she misses me. I missed her too.

Paula

It was nearing 6 pm, I was a bit early. Paula had spotted me from across the street and was smiling and waving her hand energetically, inviting me to join her on the other side of the street.

'Hey, what's up?'

'Hey Paula, so good to see you, you doing alright?' I hugged her.

'Um, yeah, I'm fine, it's all good. Which way should we go?'

She turned her whole body swiftly to one side and then caught my elbow and led me to down a narrow passage between two buildings. 'This way, it's a short cut.'

For five years now she had been working for a guy she often described as a 'total idiot' and she felt she had hit rock bottom, working for a person she felt nothing but contempt for. She walked quickly and confidently with her sturdy walking boots and I had trouble keeping up with her. She always walked so fast, I wondered why. Her voice was loud and steady but she seemed emotional and slightly worried.

'I felt like I'm going nowhere,' she said. 'I'm almost 30 years old, a working mom with no real work experience and I can't even quit my job, which after all, puts food on the table.'

'What are you going to do, then?' I asked.

'I don't know, I just know that I have to do something or I'll go crazy. I can't stand working there anymore, even though I'm free to do whatever I want, most of the time, she replied earnestly.

'But you're looking for new jobs now, aren't you, so that's good. Something will come up soon, you'll see. How are things with Christian?' I asked, quickly changing the subject, as I could sense her fearfulness.

'I can't believe he's acting so childish and so selfish. I've been so busy applying for a new job, trying to convince my dad to let us move into my grandma's flat, so we can be together, and he's always gone, hanging out with his mates, drinking beer in the park. I'm getting so

tired of this. I would like to go out with my girlfriends too, how come I don't have the time and he does?' I sensed indignation in her voice.

As she carried on talking, what struck me most was her account of their arguments about the refurbishment in which they were going to move into in the spring. She complained about his unwillingness to compromise on anything related to the flat's interior design, for which he had artistic but quite unrealistic and unpractical ideas. She was always the one to back down from any argument, with the hope that he might change his mind eventually. I hoped that she would share more about their differences, as I found it fascinating how simple everyday matters can cause so much angst and frustration. She expressed great reluctance in continuing to live with her parents and her desire to be independent and free. She planned to live with her boyfriend, son and a German Sheppard dog in the newly refurbished flat. She seemed worried about his stubbornness and his refusal to 'listen to her', as she put it.

At approximately 7 pm we reached Mr. Pizza restaurant. I pulled the glass door's aluminium handle and we entered confidently. Angelia, Ivanka and Anna were already there, sitting in a red leather booth in the right corner of the pizzeria, smiling and giggling, their faces lit with delight as we approached. It had been a long time since we have been together, just us girls. After all, they are all working full-time, had different occupations and I lived in Luton. It had been eight months since I've been home last. All four of my girlfriends were in relationships at the time. I thought it would be a good idea to inquire about their relationships as my chat with Paula got me thinking about what were the roles and their partners when it comes to their leisure choices.

Coincidentally, Lana Del Rey's song '*This is what makes us girls*' was playing in the background. Vivid images sprung out in my mind, as I was observing my friends passing the menus around, trying to decide what to drink. This merry sight transported me back to the times when we were in high school, first and second year studies when we used to lie to our parents, sneak out and party all night and then sleep it off on a bench in the park, waiting for

the first vehicles of public transportation to get you back home, before our moms wake up. I realised that the way we have developed our past time/leisure time/lifestyle has a great deal to do with how we've been spending our days back then in our high school years. The way we socialised; the skate and urban outdoors sub-cultures we were part of in the 90s and 2000s and the way we thought we were so cool.

Anna

Anna has always been there for me. I feel at ease in her presence. She is the kind of girl who holds her head up high when she walks down the street: her chin parallel to the ground, her piercing gaze steady but soft and innocent. She is graceful and kind-hearted. Annoyingly though, if you dare plan a meeting with her you can be pretty sure she is going to be late. Her excuses are mostly unjustifiable but whatever wrongdoing she might have committed her vivacious and adorable persona is too disarming and you can't stay mad at her for long. She has impeccable taste and always dresses with style. Hip and cool, a true diva, she would hold your hair up in a ponytail in a case you can't hold your liquor, or will lend you some money without judgement or hesitation. Bringing us all thoughtful gifts was a typical expression of her caring, loving soul. She and her Austrian boyfriend have been together for a few years now. 'He is the one,' she said one day to me. She meant it. In Mr. Pizza, I sat next to her.

'Hey Anna? You up too much lately? I haven't spoken to you in a while. I couldn't catch you on Skype either.'

She put the glass down and looked me straight in the eyes, as if she was accusing me of asking her a stupid question. Ivanka cut her right off.

'She's just pretending,' she sneered. 'She's been avoiding us, saying she's too busy. I've been waiting for you to answer my text for two days now.'

'It's not like that,' Anna replied sheepishly. 'I've been so busy at work that I can hardly get any sleep. I feel so tired. I've been working on the advertising campaign now and it's been crazy. I'm sorry.' Embarrassed she picked up her glass again and had a sip, and then she got her phone out and started texting.

'Come on, Anna, don't worry, it will pass. Aren't you getting an assistant or something, soon?' I asked.

'I don't know yet, I hope so.'

'Ok, let's have another bottle of wine then?' Ivanka interrupted again, unaware that she was being quite rude now.

'Yeah, I'm down for it,' Angelia exclaimed.

'Me too,' I rejoined.

We got another bottle of wine and we talked some more. I arranged to meet with Anna, at her place in a couple of days. After that we went to a party.

Angelia

For as long as I can remember, Angelia has always been a troublemaker and the talk of the town. It is not that she is looking for trouble but she is the kind of person who would rather kill herself than be bored. We have been close friends for more than 10 years now. When we first met, her reputation had already preceded her. I had heard stories about that party girl that is great fun and can drink anybody under the table. Angelia had many gentleman callers and a small entourage of like-minded, long-haired girlfriends (myself included) with which she plotted her nightly adventures round town. Contrary to common conceptions, she was an excellent student and had her BA in Social Science and her MSc in Journalism. Although she did not have much time to read she always had a book lying on the nightstand next to the

big Hello Kitty jewellery box, which contained all sorts of colourful ornaments and hair accessories. She now reminds me of lost innocence.

Once, this unstoppable force of nature masterminded and successfully orchestrated a mission to steal ice cream from an ice cream stand, strategically positioned on a central Sofian street, at 2 am in the morning. This drunken escapade ended up with one soldier being driven to the nearest hospital with a broken ankle and slight concussion, by a police officer and a taxi driver, and another brave trooper missing in action. She was 18 years old at the time. Later on, she would brag about this debacle to any willing listener she met in a bar or club, with the proud stance of a military commander who has accomplished his mission.

I would say we have had our fair share of 'complicated situations', good and bad times, funny and sad moments. We would go snowboarding, and get lost in the woods somewhere or we would close down the night club at 7 am. Developmental theory is based on change and the personal and social roles individuals play throughout the life course. Changes occur all the time in all spheres of life and people assume different roles and the obligations and responsibilities that come along with them. However, as my friends and I were taking a walk down memory lane, I realised that even though we are not teenagers anymore and all of us are preoccupied with work and relationships our leisure habits and practices have pretty much stayed the same. I mean, I had hardly stepped off the plane and the first thing we did was to order enough wine to drown ourselves in it, on a Wednesday evening. I guess habits die hard. It is either that, or really the fact that I have not been home for such a long time which brings up the shared identities that after all are partly formed through this interaction. All of us were happy to be there, present in the moment, even for a few hours, we could be ourselves, we could talk and share and not being judged by the outside world.

As an insider (who has been 'outside' for a long time), I realised that I have slowly become alienated from the Sofian lifestyle I used to be so accustomed to. The interaction with my

girlfriends had changed. A part of me still felt I'm in the right place, after all I've been away for months at a time, and for the last year and a couple of month I've been home for just two weeks. I belonged and at the same time I failed miserably at blending in. *'You've changed,* Paula said, staring at me with pure brown eyes, as if waiting for me to deny it. They all talked about their everyday routines, jobs, boyfriends, I felt uncomfortable. I could not say anything about myself, as they did not know where I live now, who my 'other' friends are and what my life was like abroad.

Having a night out was what my friends and I would usually do on a Friday or Saturday, if we were not out of the city. Whenever the weather allowed, in the spring, summer and autumn we would be in a park or a city garden, sitting on benches put close together to form a square and drink whiskey and coke from plastic cups. At night, the city parks and gardens would transform from children's playground into adult's social wonderland. 'Bench parties' and 'garden champagne' drinking (the cheapest bottle of white wine, mixed with Sprite) were an inseparable part of our social calendars. In the winter, we would stay indoors in a bar or at someone's place doing pretty much the same. The meeting would be set for 9 pm. We would meet on the steps in front of the Bulgarian Ministry of Sport and Physical Education and often wait for a girl or two who were always running late. Once we had decided where to go, we would head in that direction in twos and threes laughing and shouting. Our destination would be a small, basement-like, dimly lit bar, somewhere in the hidden cobbled streets of the city centre, which offers the cheapest alcohol beverages possible. We would then proceed to order poisonous mixtures of all kinds of liquor, depending on the mood and the season. One or two girls would quickly put the tables together so we can sit close to each other, resembling an ancient ritual, a preparation for what is about to be a 'ladies night out'. For us, this was freedom, growing up and living in Sofia. We were free to do whatever we wanted.

In Mr. Pizza, most of the stories the girls and I were remembering, or at least the funniest ones, were actually epic drunken escapades. We would drink and talk about boys and our favourite TV series all the time. Samantha Jones was Angelia's favourite character from *Sex and the City*, actually, she was pretty much as foul-mouthed and snappy as Samantha, and she loved talking about sex, often disregarding the audience and the situation. At the time, I found that to be an extremely bad taste. In time I realised it was her own way of showing the rest of the world that she doesn't care what other people thought; a way of confronting a taboo subject and resisting stereotypical female sexuality. Our lively discussions, frequently dominated by Angelia, included all sorts of topics from bikini waxing to scandalous, juicy gossip about the people we knew. In contrast, our male counterparts, not being too eager to listen to these vivid depictions, repeatedly declined our invitations to join us for drinks. In the following weeks, I succeeded in interviewing all of them and arrange for follow-up semi-structured interview sessions for the main study.

In summary, throughout the pilot study fieldwork I mostly felt as an insider, as my 'official' persona as a feminist researcher, with an academic agenda, had not transpired completely. Yet, I also felt, nostalgic, culturally inadequate and alienated from my friends. At the time I was single and they were all in relationships; I only came back to research them, and went back to the UK, which widened the gap between us, reinforcing my outsider position. These contradictions, tensions and negotiations of the emic/etic positions became even more complex to me as the semi-structured interviews with non-close friends.

5.3 Researcher's Reflexivity during Phase 2: Conduct of Main study

I continued the introspective practice during Phase 2: Conduct of Main study as the following problematic ethical and epistemological dilemmas occurred during that stage: a) the unbalanced power relationship pervading in research situations; b) the unexpected 'harm' to the researcher herself; and c) the conflicting roles of the researcher. This section is

dedicated to my struggle with these dilemmas and presents the context in which they occurred.

The role of the researcher in the interview process

The issue of the relationship between the researcher and researched during the main study stage ensued from the blurred boundaries that exist between the author and some of the interviewees in terms of friendship. Stacey (1988) wondered if the 'appearance of greater respect for and equality with research subjects in the ethnographic approach masks a deeper, more dangerous form of exploitation' (p.22), because, she found 'the greater the intimacy, the apparent mutuality of the researcher/researched relationship, the greater is the danger' (p.24). Having in mind these dangers, I attempted to mitigate any potentially exploitative aspects of this researcher–researched relationship, by obtaining fully informed consent from the participants, as previously stated, and by reminding them continuously during the fieldwork of their rights to withdraw from the study at any time or from answering questions uncomfortable for them, as recommended by Kirsch (2005). Furthermore, I couldn't help but believe in my own ability to avoid and prevent exploitation and other forms of betrayal of friendship, as a friend and as a feminist doing research *for* women, not *on* them.

Regardless of my efforts, however, a most unexpected situation occurred when I interviewed my friend Anna. A few months prior to the interview session, she separated from her long-term boyfriend who had unexpectedly broken up with her, and travelled back to his native Austria, leaving her emotionally devastated and bitterly disillusioned. In confidence, she confided in me all about her struggles to recover from the agonizing separation, which had profoundly negative effects on all other aspects of her life. Despite her emotional distress, she confirmed her willingness to be interviewed. She seemed fairly content and in good spirits in the introductory part of the session. I followed my interview script and asked her about her leisure choices and in what way is her leisure important to her. Suddenly, she

became visibly agitated, her chin started quivering and she burst into tears. She told me how now that she's single again she's trying to focus on herself through choosing leisure activities that would help her heal and move on with her life. She believed that her ex-boyfriend was '*the one*' and now that he's gone she needed to 'build herself up' and start over. Obviously, distraught, she kept talking. I felt uncomfortable and I switched off the audio-recording device. We rescheduled the interview for another day. At home, I wrote the following in my research journal:

... I'm angry at myself right now; Anna's reaction caught me by surprise. I was so focused on getting my interview done that I did not think about her emotional state. Even though I knew she was recovering from heartbreak, her reaction to the most 'innocent' of my questions was unexpected and I made her cry. This was not my intention... I wonder what the correct response in such a situation is. I stirred painful memories about her leisure with her ex-partner and I can't help but feel responsible for causing her pain. That's the last thing I wanted to do, I thought I was careful. Still, her answer is evocative of personal power and strength... what a fighter she is... (Author's personal diary entry: 08/04/2015)

Unexpected 'harm' to the researcher herself

Previous feminist research is predominantly concerned with the research relationships and preventing possibility of harm (physical or emotional) to participants during the research process (Oakley, 1981; Stanley and Wise, 1983; Harding, 1987). The focus is on the hierarchical relationship in which the researcher has power over the researched in terms of control of the research situation and as experts in their respective fields. The opposite possibility, however, is paid less attention in feminist research. Scholars like Sampson *et al.*, (2008) suggest that because of the feminist researcher's concern for reflexivity and for safeguarding participant's interests, the emotional vulnerability of the researcher is increased. Thus, it is possible that the research process is distressing to the investigator herself/himself in terms of the emotional risks (meaning the emotional impact of undertaking research) and 'costs' associated with the conduct of feminist research (Sampson *et al.*, 2008), such as role conflict and its ethical and personal dilemmas. Although such risks are

more common in social research dealing with sensitive subjects such as abuse or disability, it is not uncommon for other research topics where the relationship between researcher and researched is a personal one, as in the present study.

An example of such a situation occurred during my interview encounter with Maria. She and I used to be close friends in high school but have recently lost touch. At the time of the interview, she worked as a legal advisor for a gambling service operator. During our interaction, I couldn't help but feel a hint of resistance to my role as a researcher and as a friend as she continually debunked my research efforts by making insulting, snooty comments about the research study throughout the conversation. She talked in a matter-of-fact fashion, answering with a hint of disinterest, as if I've asked her the most trivial of questions and I've just wasted her precious time. Although I knew these kinds of situations were 'part of the job' I could not help but feel disrespected, not only because of my role as a dedicated researcher but because of our friendship as well. Knowing her for such a long time, I thought she was not taking the interview seriously. Even though we went through all the questions and she did reply to all of them, I felt like I had failed. This is what I wrote in my research journal about our interaction:

I feel confused and a bit hurt. Why would she act so stuck-up? We used to share a desk for four years in high school; we used to be best friends. I'm all for constructive criticism but I detest subtle sarcasm. It felt like she's devaluing my dedication as a feminist researcher and my personal struggle to self-empowerment. I feel demotivated and alone. The responsibility to produce 'valid', egalitarian research was weighing heavily on me now, more than ever... (Author's personal diary entry: 10/06/2015)

Reflecting back on this interview session I admit feeling superior to Maria (because of my academic development so far, and because of my chosen path to personal empowerment, which included the present research project) and that infused my confidence as an expert on other people's lives. I had become a bit arrogant about being able to identify the 'oppressive intersecting institutions', (as a feminist researcher) which others were unable to recognise and/or resist. I had fallen into the trap of my own 'true consciousness' (i.e., my unique view

of the social reality that denies other people's interpretations and understandings) and had become a bit self-important. That patronizing academic 'self' has become in conflict with my 'egalitarian feminist researcher' self. This roles conflict and expertise dilemma I wanted to abolish. I felt vulnerable and alone in my research endeavour.

Role conflict during the main study

Both situations described above (the interviews with Anna and Maria) illustrated ethical and epistemological dilemmas that ensued because of the researcher's conflicting roles. Difficulties occurred even though I was acutely aware of the power relationships the respective dilemmas that may transpire. Table 11 shows the roles and emic/etic positions of the researcher in the 12 respective reflexive categories. Ticks are placed in each of the reflexive dimensions to show the emic/etic opposition of the researcher in the respective category. The places where both positions are ticked, I felt like both sides of the spectrum, or as an 'outsider inside'. For instance, the role conflict about reducing the boundaries between researcher and informants ensued from both my role as a researcher and as a friend. Moreover, as one of the participants was in a non-heterosexual relationship I was an outsider, but as an insider (a Sofian woman, of a similar age, in a heterosexual relationship) I could relate to some aspects of being in a relationship.

The role conflict dilemmas continued during the seaside trip with three of my girlfriends, which I considered a great opportunity to better understand women's leisure meanings as a participating insider. My girlfriends and I camped at Gradina (a seashore campsite near Burgas) where I have spent my summer holiday for the last seven years. This time we decided to go just us girls, no boyfriends, no families, just us girls. The autoethnographic account of the girls' trip to Gradina is offered in the next sub-section.

Table 11: The multiple (personal and social role identities) in relation to the emic/etic spectrum

Dimensions of reflexivity	Emic (insider) position	Etic (outsider) position
Nationality: Bulgarian	✓	
Gender identity: Cisgender/female	✓	
Marital status: Unmarried	✓	
Number of children: 0		✓
Relationship status: In a heterosexual relationship	✓	✓
Age: 31	✓	✓
Educational qualification: BA, MSc	✓	✓
Religious affiliation: Christian Orthodox	✓	
Employment (social class): Middle class	✓	
Relationship to participant: A close friend	✓	
Relationship to participant: An Acquaintance		✓
Academic position: A feminist researcher		✓

Source: Author's work

5.3.1. Researcher's personal accounts of her experience in the field (phase 2: main study)

Gradina stories

On the 20th June, 2015, we arrived at Gradina camping grounds (round 40 km south of Burgas on the southern Black Sea Coast). The next day I found myself sitting on the makeshift wooden bench at the Sirocco beach bar waiting for Anna, Angelia and Maya to emerge from the water and join me. During this short stay, I had already developed quite a taste for gin mixed with pineapple juice. I liked its simplicity and eloquence and adopted it as my signature summer drink.

Sirocco was one of the more unpretentious beach bars on Gradina's beach strip. It was a bar by night and a wind and kite surf school by day. The place was a small, comical-looking wooden shack that sheltered three bars – one bar at the bottom end and two side bars. The bars were tended by a semi-conscious staff that consisted mainly of surfer wannabes and teenage girls looking to earn some money for the summer. The walls of this scruffy

construction were generously decorated with posters, flags, stickers and old, unused surf boards inside and out, and in the night time the inside was illuminated by nightlights and tiny Chinese lanterns. It was cozy and inviting. Sirocco was a favourite spot for many Sofian weekenders (myself and my girlfriends included), who often poured into Gradina in the summer, looking to escape their mundane urban existence by getting closer to nature and spend all of their savings on booze, weed and fresh seafood. It was fairly inexpensive and the owner (local kite surf celebrity) did not protest if his customers stayed under the shade all day long and only ordered once from the bar.

Gradina camping ground was (and I suppose still is) a place of extremes that is mostly popular among the kite and wind surfers because of its favourable weather conditions. The general lawlessness and lack of building regulations in Bulgaria had gradually turned Gradina from a protected wild oasis, where in the early 80s and late 90s a handful of people pitched their tents, into a construction site where new hotels were erected every summer and tourists came to party every summer. It's sad really.

I fell in love with it the first time I went camping there with friends in my early 20s and gradually it became our summer holiday spot. I endured the hardships of Bulgarian seaside camping for days on end; showered with ice cold water in semi-demolished baths and defended myself against all kinds of monstrous creepy crawlies. Regardless of all these inconveniences, I tried to look on the bright side and have as much fun as possible, which I mostly succeeded in doing. I sacrificed comfort in the name of a more unconventional type of fun – the survivalist kind. Unfortunately, this sacrifice of mine had its costs. I'd come back home on the verge of absolute exhaustion (because of dehydration, insomnia, and the questionable hygiene of all of Gradina's bathroom facilities) or needing 24 hours interrupted sleep.

Nevertheless, I loved it because it was full of people I knew and the beach parties were awesome. Unfortunately, in the last few years, nobody could afford to take more than two

weeks off work like they used to. My girlfriends had hardly managed to take a few days off to make the trip. We did not have much time to book accommodation, in fact, I was the only one who preferred to book a hotel room instead of camp, but the others protested, so I agreed to camp once more. We pitched our tent in the nearby woods, right behind one of the beach bars; we did not pay for it.

I spotted Angelia, Maya and Anna coming out of the water, shivering and smiling. I was at the bar ordering when I felt a moist hand grip my shoulder from behind.

‘Stef, what’s up?’

I turned around and I saw my friend Eva’s smiling face.

‘Hey, Eva, you startled me. Did you finish for today?’ I beamed back, happy to see her.

Eva was an old friend of mine; she worked as a bartender at Sirocco bar, whose proprietor was a shady character named Harry. Harry did not possess licenses to run a bar nor the necessary permits to manage a surf school, but he did, and even recruited other kite and wind surf instructors (mostly acquaintances of his who needed money to keep up their party lifestyle) to give lessons, on the low, to German and Russian tourists, for a cut of the profits. Eva’s boyfriend, Mario, worked for Harry as well, as a wind surf instructor.

‘Yeah, I’m done for today, I’ll grab a beer and I’ll join you, yeah?’

‘Sure, I’ll sit on the beanbags over there. I pointed to the front part of the bar.

In the meantime, Angelia, Anna and Maya, made their way to bar and bought pre-dinner drinks. We sat down in a circle, on the big colourful beanbags to enjoy our drinks as dusk fell. It was my favourite part of the day when the sun drowned in the sea and the beach started to empty. It was the end of the day shift and the beginning of the night one. We set comfortably and chatted as the day was coming to an end. Suddenly, Eva’s boyfriend, Mario,

overestimating his own agility, jumped up from behind the bar and in a misguided attempt to jump-scare us, plunged his body over our table, knocking over beer bottles and cocktail glasses. Nobody saw him approaching until it was too late. Visibly tipsy, he laughed loudly, looking at us triumphantly. He picked himself up and positioned himself next to Eva, throwing his arm around her shoulder – an act supposedly indicating his affection for her. To me it seemed fake and grotesque. Then he pushed her aside, reached to untie Angelia's swim top, which was fastened at the back, but failed to do so, as she was as quick as a panther and jerked out of his reach:

'Hey man, piss off, you're such a jerk.' She looked at him, and then inquisitively turned her eyes to Eva.

'Oh, don't mind him, he's just a little drunk.' She gave a sheepish smile as she mopped her off her green top with a tissue.

'Yeah, don't be such a drama queen, what's wrong with you?' Mario snapped at Angelia as she hid behind Anna and Maya, who looked at each other in disbelief.

Mario was relatively good-looking, lithe and athletically built but appeared filthy. His red board shorts were worn out and dirty and his skin was badly sun-burned and rough. Lying on the ground he stared at us, examining. I knew him, because we had mutual friends and I had seen him around the bar last year, but I was doubtful that he would remember me or the rest of the girls. We were all Eva's friends and they had just started going out a few months ago. He fixed his gaze on me as if he recognised me.

'Aren't you Laura's friend? I've seen you together, last year,' he asked.

'Yeah, we're mates.' I cracked a smile at him in an attempt to disguise my increasing contempt for his behaviour.

'Do you have a boyfriend?'

'No, I don't have one,' I replied.

'Wow, you are so fit and you don't have a boyfriend. You must be good-for-nothing.' He smirked, got up and headed back to the bar. We sat in silence. Eva apologized.

'Oh, he can be such a handful sometimes. I told you just don't mind him, he can be a like that sometime, otherwise he's very nice, I assure you.'

'I have my doubts about that,' Anna murmured, as Eva ran after him.

We left after a while, our drinks were spilled and we did not feel like having refills.

The following day, round noon we headed to Bash Bar – a much bigger and much fancier beach bar, where we decided to chill for the day. We were after the bar's homemade lemonade, good music and toilet facility availability (which alone was as good a reason as any). We planted the umbrella, a couple of metres away from the bar and spread the towels in a square underneath. The weather was hot and sunny, Anna sunbathed, Maya read from *Cosmopolitan* out loud as we loved laughing at some of the absurd articles in it. Not far from us a fairly big group of guys had set up their camp. The music was loud and they jumped around like monkeys and danced, they seemed to enjoy themselves. One of them was doing pull-ups on the side of their wooden camping shelter, and others were playing football. In front of the camp, lined in a row, facing the sea, three more blokes wearing caps and sunglasses were sitting on green folding chairs surrounded by empty beer cans. Coming out of the water I noticed one of them holding binoculars to his eyes and raising what seemed to me like a cardboard sign with the number 8 written on it in bold, black caps. I dismissed it, thinking they were playing some sort of game with the guys that kicked the ball around.

Anna and Maya were coming back from the bar, carrying mojitos and ice cream.

'Did you see these guys?' Maya inquired.

'I don't like that music, how can they listen to that horrible dub-step.' I protested, as the music was blasting now.

'Yeah, the music is bad enough, but did you see them rating the girls who pass by? They are rating the girls' looks; just like in that TV series show... I forget the name.'

'Yeah, I saw this one guy holding binoculars and a sign... they rated me an 8,' I said.

'Yeah, I saw them too; I think they rated me a 6.' Anna frowned.

'Ok, these guys have pissed me off... I just want to have a few nice days off, without having to deal with stuff like this. Is it too much to ask? Why don't we start rating their looks instead? They better start doing push-ups on that bar and lay off the beer, because none of them are 10s.' Maya took a big gulp from her glass, sat down on the towel and lit up a cigarette. We sat in silence for a while and then Maya proposed a game of Scrabble.

The next two days we spent in blissful revelry. I tried to forget about Mario's insult and enjoy the rest of the holiday with my girlfriends. We went to a salsa night at Sirocco, there was live music and the bar was decorated with tea candles and flowers. Mario was there, playing table football. We didn't say a word to each other but even the sight of him made me nauseous. Eva and I went to the nearest shop to buy another bottle of Sailor Jerry rum. It was cheaper to split the bottle four ways than buying drinks from the bar. On the way, I wanted to ask her what was she doing with a guy who is so disrespectful, and to me, a total waste of space, but I did not. After all it was not my business, was it? I felt conflicted. I'm not a therapist, or a psychologist, who am I to judge? I'm just a friend on a vacation, who happened to be a researcher too. We went back to the party and drank and laughed and danced. The next day we drove back to Sofia. In the car we decided that we needed to spend more time together, like we used to and I thought to myself that at Gradina I've been the happiest (being free and having fun with my friends) and I've also been the most angry and sad too (being objectified and disrespected). The saddest part was that nobody said

anything, nobody did anything, we just moved on with our lives. That's what we are supposed to do after all, isn't it, just move on...

5.4 Researcher Reflexivity Post Research

After the main data collection phase, I reflected upon the post-main study period and my research journey. I had carried out fieldwork that continued for almost six months as a heterosexual Sofian woman, an aspiring feminist researcher, a friend, an acquaintance. I embarked on a research motivated by my personal life and experiences that turned out to be a quest for self-knowledge, self-identification and continuing effort to conceptualise it. Catherine Mackinnon (1982:21) writes that 'women's distinctive experience as women occurs within that sphere that has been socially lived as the personal—private, emotional, interiorised, particular, individuated, intimate—so that what it is to know the politics of women's situation is to know women's personal lives'. During the firework I tried to gather information about the othera and myself; I tried to have my analysis and my narrative too, as Ellinson (2009) advocated. The post-main study fieldwork reflexivity examines my experiences as a third wave feminist researcher and the authoethnographic narrative as an artistic and intellectual endeavor. The interplay of various roles throughout the fieldwork led me to develop a split personality speaking in two voices: the narrator, who is trying to make sense of the world, by simultaneously reflecting upon her, past, present and future selves, and the theorising academic, who's trying to conceptualise it.

Regardless of these commonalities during the fieldwork, it became clear that my close personal relationship with some of the participants and my not-so-close relationships with others enhanced the emic/etic dichotomy. For example, I dare say that my closest friends did accept me as an insider as my role as friend outweighed my temporary role as a researcher. On the other hand, the women acquaintances might have perceived me more as an outsider, as they knew that my researcher role is the predominant one. I conclude from my encounter with Sofian women that my multiple roles and self-identification resulted in my

own feminist transformation and personal growth. This thesis and the chosen feminist methodology are a reflection of my own revolt, my voice...I concluded that doing feminist research is much more than just collecting data, it is an inward journey that continues beyond the scope of the investigation. Finally, I agree with Stanly and Wise (1993:123) who claim that 'there's no such creature as a sorted-out feminist'.

Chapter 6: Presentation of Immediate Findings

6.1 Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter presents the interpretive findings that emerged from the study to help understand the meanings of paid work and leisure in relation to gender discourses/ideologies across the broader Bulgarian society. As already stated in Chapter 3, section 4.3.3, the textual data was analysed by coding segments of text into themes, sub-themes, categories and sub-categories composed on both deductive and inductive principles (Froggatt, 2001). Appendix 24 shows screenshots of the thematic and categorical hierarchy of the thematic coding process made in NVivo 11 to adhere to the trustworthiness criterion of the analysis of qualitative data. In this chapter, key examples are used to demonstrate each issue relevant to the understanding of the study problem and sub-problems. The study findings are presented in order of the research sub-problems: sub-problem 1 (*meanings of leisure for the selected Sofian women in full-time employment*), sub-problem 2 (*The meanings of paid work for the selected Sofian women in full-time employment*) and sub-problem 3 (*explore Sofian women's subjective perceptions of gender discourses/ideologies in and out of work settings*).

6.2 The Meanings of Leisure for Sofian Women

The meanings of leisure for the selected Sofian women vary from more localised, socio-cultural assumptions about leisure to more Westernised conceptualisation. The differences in the gendered meanings are apparent from the intersection of the historical, cultural, and social factors that influence these women's leisure practice and experiences in the broader society. Some women described meanings that fit within the traditional Western conceptualisation of the phenomenon, which depends primarily on work for its definition. Others, depending on their life situations and occupation expressed meanings consistent with the unique political, economic, technological, and cultural circumstances of the current contexts and the power imbalance within social structures.

6.2.1 Perceived Values/Entitlement to leisure

Almost all the interviewed women held high value of leisure in their lives. They explained its importance in different contexts of their daily lives and in relation mainly to work, motherhood responsibilities, social relations and their respective life situations. The value associated with leisure, in the sense that it is critical part of daily life, is perceived by most of the women as entitlement to leisure. Entitlement appeared to be expressed by placing the focus on the self, being on one's own and doing leisure for one's own sake. Moreover, although there were slight variations in the associated values in accordance to the individual's situation, the predominating understanding of the term 'leisure' was as 'time or activity for oneself'. This perspective is illustrated in the following examples:

Angelia:... leisure is everything I feel like doing... Whenever I want to be alone and do things on my own. This is leisure for me... I mean, outside of work and all the responsibilities and obligations,... I call it 'me time'. I want to have more leisure, which I do not share with the people... For me, leisure time is never enough.

Anna:... For me, leisure is time for myself. Time in which I decide for myself what to do in order to feel good, feel happy and satisfied, this includes sleeping and movies, parties and concerts and everything like that... Leisure is very important to me, and I anticipate it all the time because work is definitely not everything for me.

Ivanka:... I think leisure is mostly about being alone and enjoying things on your own, I guess that's because of work too. When I have to spend time with people, some of whom I don't even like.

These conceptualisations exemplify the value, centrality and importance of leisure in women's everyday lives. The emphasis on 'the self' that most women expressed, results from their desire to have 'me time' or have leisure that they 'don't share with other people'. This need might be interpreted as a possible indicator of the multiple roles these women assume. Consequently, the valence of the 'self-cantered' leisure, the concept of agency and the idea of leisure as freely chosen (Shaw, 1994) are interpreted here as a possibility for resistance and personal empowerment through leisure, which is discussed further in section 6.2.6, leisure as resistance.

Furthermore, some of the women expressed a yearning for more leisure and considered the lack of it as a problem. According to some of them, this lack of leisure was a consequence of prioritising work over leisure. The following quotations illustrate the interconnectedness of work and leisure and the lack of leisure influencing the quality of the women's lives.

Svetlana:...I'm a person who is all about leisure. I would not be happy with my work, whatever it is, if I didn't have enough leisure. If I had to stay in the office until 11 pm and go to work on a Saturday, as some of my friends actually do, I wouldn't survive. It's important for me to do stuff outside of work.

Angelia:...I would say 20% of my time can be considered as leisure. At this stage of my life, that's it... I think that not having enough leisure is a bad thing and I try to balance work and leisure, as much as I can. Unfortunately, that balance is hard to accomplish as I've got so many things on my mind, sometimes I don't know where to begin.

Paula:... When I think about it, I'd like to have more time for leisure. I was thinking the other day, that I would rather have more time off work than an increase of my salary.

These quotations support the argument that leisure is of great value for these Sofian women regardless of their occupations and life situations. Moreover, some of the women prioritise their leisure needs over an increase of their salary, which possibly indicates an aspiration towards a more balanced lifestyle, in which work is not the predominant aspect or central life interest. The salience of leisure in this case can be considered as individual acts of resistance towards the contemporary work culture that identifies work as a central life goal, and glorifies materialism and consumerism.

In contrast to this assumption, one woman voiced a different view, namely that lack of leisure is not a significant problem in her live, at that moment, as shown below:

Kalina:...Having in mind that I'm not the most active person when it comes to leisure, I'd say, it's not the most important thing in the world. I'm working most of the time, so I guess a quarter of my time is free...Ever since I started working I feel like I have immersed myself in my work...I can't switch from work to leisure mode easily and I think that if my employer agrees to increase my salary, I'd probably just work... There are leisure events that I anticipate, of course, like meeting with a friend or going to dinner with someone, but it's

enough for me too. There are periods in life, when nothing really exciting or important happens and then I don't mind working at Easter or Christmas and not having that much free time.

The opposite perception about the value and centrality of leisure suggested that both value and entitlement to leisure are often highly situational. Kalina claimed that she was quite content with her work and that leisure was not the most important aspect of her life, so she did not need any more of it. She attributed this feeling of satisfaction to the fact that nothing more exciting was happening in her life at that particular moment so that she would need more leisure. In this case, she referred to leisure as a shared experience with a romantic partner. This attitude supports the idea that leisure meanings change during the life course and in relation to social relations, interactions and romantic relationships. In Kalina's case, the monetary ramification of work (the economic gain) is considered of greater value than leisure itself (in contrast with the previous views) because she was a single, full-time employed woman with no children. The link between value/entitlement to leisure and role shift during the life course raises questions about the prioritization of romantic relationships and the value/entitlement of leisure for single, working women in their 20s and 30s. What is more, it poses questions about the dominant ideologies of femininity and the perpetuation of the 'ethic of care' (i.e the socialization of girls to cater for the needs of others at the expense of their own needs) (Gilligan, 1982), which may result in increased leisure constraints for women.

Furthermore, the feeling of guilt was mentioned by one woman, in relation to value and entitlement to leisure.

Maya:...Ever since the university years, we – the architects - can't get enough sleep, we're always busy, always drawing... I must admit though, if I didn't like it or was not passionate about architecture, I probably wouldn't do it in the first place. I don't like overburdening myself with work, which is not healthy. I've worked for 20 hours per day... I would try to be more organised because sometimes it's my own fault that I don't have time for leisure. I tend to procrastinate a bit...I think that if I'm more organised I could manage my workload better. I try to take up side projects too, as my salary is quite low and except for the social benefits. I need additional income... Now, everything

I can't do anymore is my favourite. I miss hanging out my girlfriends. I wish I could go out during the week with them after work without feeling guilty about it, like it's a mortal sin.

Although most interviewed women felt entitled to leisure, some experienced feelings of guilt that prevent them from leisure and some blame themselves for not being able to fit in leisure into their daily lives. Maya's narrative indicated that she has a strong career orientation, she enjoys her work and is dedicated to it, and even so, she blamed herself for procrastinating and because of that felt unentitled to leisure. Even though interpersonal and intrapersonal constraints should not be underestimated in the analysis of values and entitlement, in Maya's case it can be argued that the role of the contemporary work culture and its inherent assumptions about the value and importance of paid work has an effect on her perceptions about the value of leisure and her entitlement to it. Thus, although she enjoyed her work and was dedicated to it she felt unentitled to leisure because she thought she needed to do even more.

Finally, an interesting point was made by Sasha in relation to the value of leisure and entitlement. When asked if she was happy with the leisure she had at that moment she replied thus:

Sasha:...No, not at all, because I fill it all up with all kinds of activities and I wish I could have more '*me*' time. For example, dancing is something I do for myself but it's also time-consuming because I go up to four times per week so there is no time left just to relax... Now that leisure time is so scarce I try to utilise my free time as much as possible, catching up with friends, and so on, but I end up exhausted. I feel pressured to have as much leisure as possible.

Sasha places the importance on active leisure (sport related, physical activity), which takes up most of her free time. Even though it is a freely chosen, enjoyable activity with supposed health benefits, the value of leisure is increased in relation to its absence of unobligated free time. Consequently, Sasha feels pressured to fill in every possible minute with as many leisure occurrences as possible, thus minimising the inherent positive outcomes and

benefits. The exact reasons for the perceived pressure should not be attributed only to intrinsic motivation but to structural influences as well.

6.2.2 Perceived Benefits/Outcomes of Leisure

In this section, the perceived benefits/outcomes of leisure for these Sofian women in full-time employment are examined. The sub-theme of benefits and outcomes comprises of eight categories that emerged from the data: (1) *rest and relaxation* – including some references about the women's negative assumptions about home leisure (2) *doing nothing*; (3) *enjoyment, pleasure and happiness*; (4) *escape from routine and responsibility*; (5) *healthier way of living and self-love*; (6) *Intellectual improvement and knowledge*; (7) *sport and physical activity*; and (8) *stimulus seeking*. The women elaborated on their individual motivations for leisure engagement and outcome of leisure they anticipated in accordance with their subjective conceptualisation of leisure.

Firstly, the constructs of rest and relaxation were the most frequently cited by these Sofian women in full-time employment regardless of their occupation and life situation. Table 12 shows particular examples of the importance of this benefit for employed women.

Table 12: Particular examples of rest and relaxation as benefit/outcome of leisure

Pseudonym of participant	Particular Quotation
Ivanka	<i>Having some rest is so important for me. After I've had proper rest I can focus on doing different things; you can't work all the time, can you?</i>
Angelia	<i>In my view its very important,(leisure) because at very least you can have some rest, emotionally and physically. We tend to overburden ourselves with work and that's not good.</i>
Anna	<i>During the weekend, I normally try to get enough sleep, I like having an afternoon nap, if I can... It's a way for me to have some rest and it charges me, I mean gives me energy and makes me feel good.</i>
Daniela	<i>My motivation is to rest, because otherwise when I work too hard and without some rest I get so exhausted I don't want to do anything; I don't have energy, I get depressed and lose my strength and my productivity decreases drastically. For me it's important to be able to rest; to be able to go in the outdoors and recharge my batteries from Mother Nature.</i>

Boyana	<i>For me, recently, leisure is time for relaxation and rest; time when I'm not checking my email constantly. Also, physical rest and recuperation and getting enough sleep, that is one of the most important things for me. After that I can do whatever I want, I'm reborn.</i>
Maria	<i>As I said, for me, at this point, the most important thing is getting some rest. I rest when I'm alone and when get enough sleep. I feel safe at home, and I can relax. My everyday is just so hectic that I need a place to recuperate.</i>

Source: Author's work

Almost all of the interviewed women referred to rest and relaxation as a priority and most desired leisure outcomes. Some commented that they rarely have enough rest, and others stated that it is absolutely imperative for their emotional and physical recuperation from work and they wanted 'peace and quiet'. A few women pointed out that they try to get enough sleep, whenever they can, and some felt like being 'reborn' afterwards. In other words, these women internationally sought and chose this benefit/outcome of their own volition.

A different attitude towards rest and relaxation and getting enough sleep was expressed by Paula (a divorced mother of one; in a heterosexual romantic relationship, at the moment of the investigation). She felt like sleeping was a waste of time and blamed herself for not being able to organise her daily life in order to have more active leisure. Since her leisure included caregiving responsibilities, she felt constrained and unhappy with the fact that she needed sleep and relaxation instead of engaging in active leisure. Her position is exemplified in the following dialogue:

Paula:...Well, most of the time, my leisure is linked to my son and my partner. Maybe I don't have my own leisure time, and maybe I should. I mean, maybe sometimes it's good to be on your own, with your own being. Normally, I make plans for my leisure because otherwise, if I do not plan, I wouldn't do anything. I'll only lie in bed and sleep, which is a waste, I reckon.

Stefani: Why is it a waste?

Paula: Because I can't sleep all the time, can I? But I feel so tired that I need at least a day only just to relax and sleep. And then, if I actually get to, then, I'm left with one day for doing other stuff... so, I rarely sleep all day long, although I wouldn't mind to... I'd say that I'm a disorganised person. This is a big problem for me. I understand that the lack of leisure is a result of my

inability to organise the things in my life. For example, I'm not the type of person that would wake up early in the morning and would do some sport. I'd say: 'Yeah, I'll get up early in the morning' but I won't do it.

Stefani: Is it because you don't have time to do it or...?

Paula: Well, there are people that do it. People that are organised and motivated. People that do things for themselves and that's what they do in their leisure time, for example they go running or whatever, things they do only for themselves. I guess I'm not like that.

Paula expresses doubt about having leisure for her own sake and simultaneously feels guilty for not being organised enough to fit in active leisure in her life. In this case, she means sport and physical activity. This self-criticism appeared similar to Maya's point about the intrapersonal constraints on leisure participation. Both women blamed themselves for not having good organisational and time management skills to 'fit in' leisure in their everyday. In Paula's case, it seemed though that she did not seek rest and relaxation as a benefit/outcome of leisure, but perceived it as a necessity that constrained her desire for more active leisure.

Secondly, some of the interviewed women talked about their desire to just 'do nothing' as a benefit or an outcome of leisure. Table 13 shows exemplary quotations of that leisure benefit for them.

Table 13: Particular examples of 'doing nothing' as benefit/outcome of leisure

Pseudonym and occupation of participant	Particular Quotation
Ivanka (police investigating officer)	<i>It may sounds strange but sometimes I like sitting on the couch, doing nothing and staring into space. I swear to God. I lie on the couch and just relax.</i>
Maya (architect)	<i>I want to have just enough time to do all the active leisure but have time to just do nothing as well. I really want to just do nothing.</i>
Daniela (attorney-at-law)	<i>Sometimes I don't want to do anything, just chill. Recently I haven't had the chance to just do nothing, we're always travelling somewhere.</i>
Tanya (PR account manager)	<i>I need freedom, which is expressed in not having to plan everything in advance in order to fit it all in. I want to enjoy doing nothing.</i>

Source: Author's work

Similarly to the benefits of rest and relaxation, the benefits of ‘doing nothing’ include ‘sitting on the couch and staring into space’. It is perceived as a personal choice of ‘not having to plan everything in advance in order to fit it all in’, as Tanya claimed. Some equated sleeping with doing nothing and placed a great value on being able to ‘do nothing’.

Additionally, there were specific references to happiness, enjoyment and pleasure as outcomes of leisure. Naturally, most women talked about leisure engagement not only as a way to relax and recuperate from work but also as time or activity that provide pleasurable experience as shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Examples of quotations pertaining to happiness, enjoyment and pleasure as benefits/outcomes of leisure

Pseudonym of participant	Particular Quotation
Anna	<i>Through leisure I can have a break and then do the things that make me really happy like relationships, friendships, sports, travelling and new adventures, everything like that... I personally love going out and dancing... interacting with people too, because I'm a communicative person, an extrovert. Dancing, because it makes me feel good and I can express my sensuality and show off my skills on the dance floor.</i>
Boyana	<i>... all the leisure activities I do outside of work, bring back my energy and this in turn makes me happy and wanting to enjoy myself. I feel recuperated physically and mentally so, that is why I think it's imperative to have enough leisure time.</i>
Savina	<i>When I have time for leisure I feel happy and calm. I like the feeling of being a productive and creative human being...</i>
Victoria	<i>...Oh, just an enormous feelings of satisfaction and joy when I do what I like... I feel like myself, you know.</i>
Maria	<i>Half of the time, I do it to relax and in order to take my mind off work. The other half I enjoy being with my friends and this makes me happy.</i>

Source: Author's work

Some women felt not only happy and refreshed, but able to express themselves through the leisure activity of their choice. In Boyana's case, most non-work activities are perceived to have a revitalizing, effect on her life, and this is why she considers it vital to engage in leisure. Others, referred to the benefit of being calm and happy, which seemed to correlate

with that person's productive and creative capacity. One interviewee reported that she splits her time between resting and socialising. The feeling of satisfaction with the activity and feeling of 'being oneself' were also mentioned as beneficial by Victoria, who felt happy with the perceived freedom to be herself.

The theme of 'escape from routine and responsibility' was mentioned as a desired outcome from leisure too (refer to Table 15). When asked about their motivations and reasons for leisure engagement women's answers varied in terms of the chosen leisure activity/time. Nevertheless, the desired outcome was mostly the same – escape from routine and/or responsibility through leisure.

Table 15: Examples referring to escape from routine and responsibility as benefit/outcomes of leisure

Pseudonym of participant	Particular Quotation
Tanya	<i>Leisure is my dream. I don't have enough time to sit back, relax and gather my thoughts. I can't do that at a weekend or in a few hours in the evenings without being attacked from the outside world. I want to escape from it sometimes... I've learned to appreciate and enjoy every second of it because its the only time I can escape from the routine of the everyday and focus on my needs. I try not to think about the upcoming week and how much work I need to do because that's just bad for me. Sometimes I find it hard to even just sit down and relax, I know that there is always something to be done, either around the house or for work. I caught myself daydreaming the other day, while I was at work. I had planned a weekend in the mountains with some friends of mine and I just couldn't wait for the week to be over so that we can go...you know.</i>
Sasha	<i>Lately, even if it's cold outside, I love walking the dog I guess because this is the only time of the day that I am left alone. I especially like it now, because when it's cold, there are fewer people in the park and it's peaceful. The dog plays with other dogs and I just sit there and contemplate, you know... It relaxes me and distracts me from the everyday routine. I need that because otherwise I can't really live a normal life, can you...?</i>
Paula	<i>Sometimes I would make myself a coffee and watch TV and I'll be fine just sitting there. But sometimes I feel unhappy that nothing new had happened yet again I get annoyed and frustrated. I want things to happen, because this monotonous everyday existence is just unbearable sometimes. That is why I try to get together with friends or do different things so that I don't feel this way...</i>

Source: Author's work

Tanya referred to her leisure as a 'dream'. She utilised her free time to relax and 'gather her thoughts'. She seemed to crave free unobligated time, in which she could escape from the 'outside world' and not be 'attacked' when off work. The 'dream' metaphor suggests that her leisure is constrained by work and other intra- and interpersonal constraints. That is why it is a highly valued, desired and favourable activity, the purpose of which is to help the individual cope with the pressure and monotony of everyday existence within the contemporary work culture and the nature of paid employment. Moreover, Tanya found it difficult to switch from a work to a leisure mindset, even in the comfort of her own home. Moreover, she experienced difficulties engaging and enjoying her leisure, as she remained preoccupied with work and other responsibilities. The intrusive nature of her work (as a PR account manager) seemed difficult to overcome.

Similarly, Sasha, enjoyed long walks with her dog and relished the solitary 'contemplation', even in the cold winter nights, as the park is less crowded compared to the hassle and bustle of the Sofian summertime park life. She considered it a form of relaxation and a way to escape the daily routine, which she needed in order to live a 'normal life'.

Paula also commented on the positive outcomes of the leisure activities she chose. As a full-time employed mother she enjoyed socialising and home-based leisure (including pampering herself); however, she also expressed frustration about the repetitiveness and sameness of everyday life, as she put it: 'I want things to happen'. She felt angry and frustrated about not being able to escape this routine as frequently as she wished to, although she did attend to the duties and responsibilities of motherhood.

Another frequently cited benefit/outcome was sport and physical activity as leisure, more specifically, the benefits of sport and physical activity to the individual. The theme was divided into categories according to the type of activities and related motivations or reasons for participation. Table 16 displays the various types of sports and physical activities practised and related motivations for participation.

Table 16: Types of sport/physical activity and motivation for participation

Category/type of activity	Motivation for participation	Particular quotation
Going to the gym; Riding a bicycle; Tennis and badminton;	Keeping physically fit Help dealing with stress at work Help getting rid of negative emotions Feeling strong and in control	<i>I'm an active type of person and I like to have more dynamic leisure. I always want to do something, so resting is definitely not my thing. I used to go to the gym even after a 24-hour shift and run on the mill for 40 min straight. I don't know how I got the strength to do that but it felt great. I let off the steam that way, you know... So, I guess a more active leisure lifestyle is my thing, riding a bike, tennis, badminton... I like to take care of myself and stay fit. It makes me feel good about myself and helps me deal with the stress at work. (Ivanka)</i>
Snowboarding 'Cross fit' classes	Keeping physically fit Thrill seeking	<i>Well, I snowboard in the winter, like most of my friends. I haven't gone riding recently though; I haven't had the time I guess. (Maya)</i> <i>In the weekends... last summer I went to this... 'cross fit' sport thing. It's like a boot camp; it's fun and quite physical but I liked it, I needed some sport, because I'm sitting in the office most of the time... I used to wake up at 8am on a Saturday in order to go to this thing. Lately I have the university assignments to worry about and another project aside from work, so yeah... oh, last Saturday I took a long shower... (laughs)(Maya)</i>
Yoga; Sports classes	Relaxation; Exercise; Relief of stress and workload	<i>Recently, I try to engage in sports more, I go to yoga classes now... I try to attend at least twice a week, when I can. I like it very much; it puts me back on track, helps me find the balance. (Tanya)</i>
Dancing Sports classes	Acquire and develop various skills; Relaxation Confidence boost; Self-actualisation	<i>For example, my leisure includes dancing, sports, cinema and the theater, music and going out with friends; things that relax and fulfil me... (Sasha)</i> <i>I believe that sport and physical activity as a whole helps me develop as an individual and develop different skills. For example, by engaging in sports and dancing, in particular, I have become more patient and resilient, I've become more confident, not only because of my physical appearance but because I see how much better and stronger I've become as a person and that motivates me even more and makes me feel confident. You know what they say about, sports building self-confidence, that's true in my case. I've noticed that I don't care that much about what other people think, as I used to. I feel energized... (Sasha)</i>

Source: Author's work

The types of activities, the social settings and the physical locations are examined further in section 6.2.3 Containers/Opportunities. Here, some motivations and reasons for participation

are presented. Most of the respondents claimed that their motivation for participation in sport and physical activity is to stay or keep physically fit through exercise. Others perceived leisure as a way to relax, deal with stress at work or other negative emotions. Some interviewees pointed out that the feeling of control over their bodies, the increase in confidence and the feelings of self-actualisation are strong stimulus for engagement in sports as leisure. Women, who participated in some form of extreme sports (snowboarding, skiing), stated that they enjoy the excitement and thrills of the sport.

Moreover, the perceived benefit/outcomes of intellectual improvement and knowledge through leisure became apparent when the interviewees were asked about what aspects of their leisure they would change if they had the opportunity to do so. For example, Savina wanted to 'express herself' through her leisure choices, and wished to sign up for various workshops or classes that related to her leisure interests:

Savina:... What I would like to do in the future is to better utilise my leisure time and signed up for a macramé making class or Photoshop workshop, something like that... or any kind of productive activity through which I can express myself. I'd like to have more time for such things.

The purpose of this course enrolment is learning, intellectual improvement and expression of the individual's capacity for creativity not only the pleasure of the activity. Similarly, Tanya affirmed her desire for self-expression through learning more about her personal passion – art. The aspect of leisure as an expression of the 'self' was revealed when women talked about their personal histories (in casual conversations and in interview situations) as well. Tanya's narrative showed the relationship between learning, self-identification and leisure. She gives an example of this relationship:

Tanya:... Learning is my thing for sure, I mean, learning about art. That's definitely me. It's what I'm most passionate about and that's what interests me the most. I feel good when I do it and I feel free. Art is the ultimate form of human expression and creating is a process of self-expression and self-creation. Unfortunately, I am not an artist but I'm a true believer in the power of art and its messages. That is why I love learning about the artists and their work and the message of their works and that's why I tried to incorporate it in

my everyday life and work... Up until recently, I had lectures in the university. I signed up for an MSc in Theory and History of Modern Art in University of Sofia. I have always wanted to have a Master's degree in Modern Art.

Tanya tried to incorporate her leisure interests in her everyday life by enjoying the pleasure of learning about art. She was not an artist herself, but the benefit of learning and improving her knowledge is an outcome of her leisure pursuit that was deliberately sought. To improve her expertise about art she signed up for an MSc in Theory and History of Modern Art in University of Sofia, which she completed in her free time.

Another example of intellectual improvement and knowledge as a leisure outcome was presented by Victoria and her blogging:

Victoria:... I've got my own blog. I needed to create. I like translating poetry and prose and it turned out I am also quite good at it... I became quite successful and people started noticing. It felt good to be appreciated, as good translation is hard work. I enjoy my blogging immensely because I started looking into music, and graphic design, you know things that are linked to having a blog, I learned new stuff... it's so engaging and I love it. I've definitely improved my writing skills and I think I've created some beautiful works.

The 'need to create' seemed the main motivation to engaging in blogging activity as leisure. Not only that but learning new skills and improving old ones. The creative impulse seemed to be a driving force for Victoria, who also appeared to enjoy the fact that others appreciate her written work. The versatility of the activity allows freedom to create, which it can be argued is the ultimate expression of 'self' and identity.

Finally, a couple of references were made to healthier way of living and self-love as preferred outcomes of leisure. Among these was Angelia:

Angelia:... In my view, it's very important to do whatever it takes in order to have some rest. I personally, tend to overburden myself with work and that's not healthy. Sometimes I forget to take care of myself, because there are more important things to take care first... So, sometimes, after I finish work, I like to walk home, if the weather allows it... I like walking through the city; it's

quite nice even in the winter when fresh snow had fallen... I try to eat at restaurants that serve healthy food; you know... start with the small things...

Similarly, Anna's leisure pursuits appeared to be oriented towards inner balance, self-love and positive thinking, and she expressed a similar view:

Anna: ... I started practising yoga because it helps me by bring some balance and harmony back into my life, which I desperately need at the moment. It teaches practices such as positive thinking that I can use in everyday life. Also, discipline, self-control, and breathing techniques that help me to calm down and gather my thoughts. I felt the need to engage in a leisure activity that will not only help me relax but will help me cultivate a healthier way of taking care of myself. I think yoga is perfect for that because it teaches mediation, self-knowledge, self-love.

Sasha also spoke about inner peace, self-knowledge and self-love as well but in the context of dancing:

Sasha:... Dancing gives me inner peace and provides me with the opportunity to test myself and know myself better.... I mean physically and mentally. It helps me recognise and know my strengths and weaknesses... I love dancing because I find out things about myself and my body that I've never know before, which is amazing. You start self-exploring and self-knowing and you start to accept yourself for who you are... it is awesome... really...

The emphasis on self-knowledge, self-care, self-improvement and, consequently, self-love appeared to be desired outcomes/benefits as well as motivations for leisure engagement. Emotional and mental well-being were also sought as outcomes of these leisure pursuits as they were perceived as antidotes to everyday stress and work overload in women's respective life circumstances. Some women strived for 'inner peace' as a desired outcome; others put the emphasis on 'taking care of oneself'. Life-balance and harmony was another related outcome cited by some. Consequently, it can be argued that for these women healthier lifestyle entails not only physical care of one's body, but also a more holistic, philosophical approach oriented towards one's mind, one that requires 'self-knowledge; positive thinking; self-love'.

6.2.3 Containers/Opportunities

The next component of the subjective meanings of leisure is the containers/opportunities aspect in which women 'fit in' leisure (Deem, 1986; Henderson *et al.*, 1989). Participants were asked about the types of activities, the social settings and the physical locations that are considered as 'containers' of leisure in everyday life (Deem, 1986). All the references made to any of the above-mentioned 'containers'/opportunities are discussed in this section. Firstly, the types of activities (some sports and physical activities have already been discussed) are divided into three categories (in accordance with the full-time employment aspect of all of the interviewees). These categories have been coded based not on 'what' or 'where' questions about women's leisure, as meaning is often constructed and dependent upon the opportunities and physical environments for leisure and recreation (Henderson, 1994). For example, the types of activity category consisted of: *going out*, *seasonal leisure*; *travel and tourism* as containers/opportunities for leisure. The containers/opportunities are connected to the public and private spaces some women create for themselves in the urban environment.

a) Going out

There were numerous references to 'going out' as a preferred leisure activity/opportunity for these Sofian women in full-time employment. The sub-categories comprising the main category of 'going out' show the differences and similarities in meanings within the Sofian context and according to the participant's individual views (see Table 17). For instance, Tanya was never too keen on the Sofian nightlife, in contrast with Anna, who forgets about fatigue and goes out with friends to have fun. Thus, it can be argued that 'going out' has different meanings, subjective positive and negative connotations and values for individual women. Maya talked about reducing the frequency of the activity because of employment and Ivanka seemed constrained because of an event which was important for her life.

Table 17: Sub-categories related to the differences and similarities in meanings of 'going out' for different women

Sub-Category	Particular Quotation
A favourite activity that is constrained by various life circumstances	<i>... Going out in the city, I love it; I used to do it much more often. I hope I'd resume all those things by this summer because now it's just this period I guess, of preparation for the wedding. (Ivanka)</i>
Employment as constraining	<i>... I definitely used to go out much more often and have hangovers in the mornings. I used to have time to suffer through it and it was easier, now it's different. I don't want to go to work with a hangover. Although when I think about it, I've done it, once or twice... (Maya)</i>
Friendship networks and alcohol consumption are inseparable part of the experience.	<i>When the weekend starts, I forget about the fatigue and I go out with my friends to have fun. We close the bars, drink up all the alcohol and spend all our money. (Anna)</i>
Different types of going out; A common urban type leisure that sooner or later reaches a saturation point during the life course	<i>We go out, have dinner, the usual stuff. I've grown a bit tired of these things though. I don't mind sitting at the table, drinking and having a chat but sometimes I wish we could go somewhere new, do different things, more adventurous and spontaneous. I've never been a fan of the night life in Sofia, although many of my friends are. (Tanya)</i>
Socialising; Leisure as symbolic way of displaying identity and lifestyle	<i>For me, personally, seeing other people and meeting with friends is a priority. Going out and having a drink in a bar or something, you know the normal social activities... (Anna)</i> <i>In Sofia, we like to go to the clubs and bars and one expresses his/her personal interests and the tastes in music by going to certain places. These places reflect your lifestyle; the way you dress and the way you have fun; I personally, like the outdoor places in the city, the once that have a garden or a place to sit outside. (Savina)</i>
Rejection of the 'Friday night culture'	<i>I don't feel like going to the bar or partying that much. I hardly go out anymore; I just don't feel like it. It's funny because I think to myself: ok this Friday I'll go out and get drunk, but when I get home in the evening I just want to soak my feet in and warm water and just chill at home... (Sasha)</i>
Friendship	<i>For me it's all about going out with my friends, having drinks and doing what we like... (Nikol)</i>
Alcohol consumption as leisure	<i>If we're out and we have fun that is exciting and joyful for me. I get the positive feeling of being together with my friends. We're a culture that drinks. We drink in our leisure. We go out and get drunk. That's a problem, I think... Yes, we do it all time but when it becomes a habit you'll just live for the weekend because you can finally get wasted. Then you are hungover the next day and you need to relax at home, recuperate. That's a wasted time, in my opinion.... yeah, you feel kind of nice and free at first that's why I do it too, but sometimes I go out with people that I don't really like and I drink to make it more interesting... and that's not ok. Otherwise, I don't have a problem with going out and having a drink or two... and I do it. When you think about it, that's what we do together, isn't it. We don't go out running in the park or something. (Paula)</i>

Source: Author's work

The 'going out' types of leisure that entailed drinking in bars, night clubs, pubs and other night life establishments (leisure containers) were widely cited urban types of leisure activities, which are dependent upon the individual's preferences and lifestyle. Most of the interviewees associated going out with friends, socialising and alcohol consumption (which had both a positive and a negative connotation) confirming women's contrasting view and attitudes about it. Some women like, Anna enjoy all aspects of going out (positive: socialising; being with friends and negative: spending money). Others, like Tanya considered it as an activity that, although mostly enjoyable, eventually reaches a saturation point and it is no longer pleasant or fun to do. In Savina's view, the types of 'going' out one enjoys and the places one visits are indicative of one's lifestyle and general taste in entertainment. Some women, like Kalina, reject the idea of 'living for the weekend' and the 'Friday night culture' that is common for the postmodern city condition. Similarly, to Kalina's view, Paula's narrative indicated an association of going out with drinking and in her opinion 'we are a culture that drinks' and 'we drink in our leisure'. She voiced a concern about this 'stupid' practice inherited within the Bulgarian socio-culture and its negative aspects. Still, it should be noted that the opportunity of 'going out' (in all its forms and variations) is a wider topic that is only briefly mentioned here to assist the specific, individual meanings of leisure for the interviewed women. Its specific gender and leisure problematics of are not discussed in this research study.

b) Seasonal leisure

Many women talked about how their leisure pursuits and choices are often dependent upon the season and the weather conditions in the city. The references were divided into two main categories with related sub-categories, as opportunities and constraints are related: autumn/winter and summer/spring leisure. Table 18 shows the quotations referring to autumn/winter time leisure and Table 19 presents the quotations related to spring/ summer leisure.

Table 18: Seasonal leisure: autumn/winter time leisure

Sub-category	Quotation
Housework and Home-related leisure	<i>After work, I get home round 6.15 pm. I turn on the TV and start cooking dinner. If there is laundry to be done, I'd take care of it; I'd fold the clothes too and put them in order in the wardrobe. I like my wardrobe to be in perfect order. My boyfriend gets home round 7 pm and we have dinner. We try to have dinner round that time and not late in the evening. We then watch House, and CSI and we go to bed after that. Sometimes we might go out with one of our neighbours; we've got so many bars around here. That's mostly during the winter... (Ivanka)</i>
Winter sports, Events; Home-based leisure;	<i>... Depending on the season. In summer, I would most likely go out after work for a while. In autumn, I would go to the movies or the theatre or some event. In winter I would go snowboarding or stay at home and chill I'm trying to have different types and kinds of leisure experiences and activities; and as many as possible... (Svetlana)</i>
Family-related leisure	<p><i>And in the winter snowboarding of course is the one thing I'll probably never stop doing. Although I used to go during the week and now I go mostly in the weekends and when I'm on holiday... (Angelia)</i></p> <p><i>In the winter I like skiing and hiking, going somewhere in the mountains. Skiing is my favourite. I ride with my boyfriend and my dad too... Now I want to renew my sport activities; I want to start again going to aerobics. I stopped because I got lazy. In the weekends, it depends on the season, but mostly I'd like to be with my boyfriend, travelling somewhere. (Daniela)</i></p> <p><i>Depending on the season, this winter, around Christmas I really enjoyed cooking and inviting people over for dinner. I love skiing and drawing, just chilling at home... (Boyana)</i></p>

Source: Author's work

It is clear that women in different situations and employment have different opportunities and 'containers' for leisure. For Ivanka (a police investigator), housework and related chores are a part of her non-work time. Her leisure during the autumn/winter period is mostly home-related. Svetlana, Angelia and Daniela engaged in winter sports (skiing and snowboarding) events and family-related leisure as well. For Angelia, snowboarding is a serious leisure pursuit.

Table 19: Seasonal leisure: spring/summer leisure

Sub-category	Typical quotation
Theater Cinema Events	<i>I go to the theater and the cinema; go to all kinds of cultural events and art shows. I try to follow the events and new places; I don't want to miss anything new. (Tanya)</i>
The seaside	<i>The seaside, I love the seaside, and I love when its summer and we're there. The sea calms me down and gives me peace, whatever I feel when I'm at the beach and I hear the sound of the waves, everything is alright. (Anna)</i>
Travel and tourism (inbound/outbound)	<p><i>Yes, Belmeken. That's a mountain resort in Rila Mountain. I loved it when we went there in the summer. It's a big complex of buildings with spa centres and swimming pools, it's really great. You can go hiking and then go to the sauna and the pool. My boyfriend and I love the mountains and we love hiking so whenever we have the chance we would do it. We love the outdoors. We're quite the tourists. (Daniela)</i></p> <p><i>In the summer, during the weekend, I'm always somewhere out of the city. For example, last summer I had only two weekends that I had to work and the rest I was always on the road. To be honest at one point I had had too much. I got so exhausted because I would go on a Friday after work and would come back Sunday evening and then on Monday back to work and it just got too much. So basically, I use every possible minute for leisure. It's always like that in the summer. (Svetlana)</i></p>
'Park life' = public urban park space	<p><i>In summer, I like going out in the parks and the gardens, when I'm in the city... well it's nice in the springtime. I often invite my friends to join me.... (Boyana)</i></p> <p><i>I love walking in the park in the spring and summer with friends. We would sit on the bench, drink beer and is so green and nice all around and the sun is shining, that's the best time in the city, when the spring had just begun and everyone's out, in the parks and gardens. (Savina)</i></p> <p><i>yeah, the park... I love just sitting on a bench and getting my thoughts together, contemplate about the future, just be away from everybody for a while. I used to go to the park almost every day when I worked in the university. (Victoria)</i></p>

Source: Author's work

c) Travel and Tourism

Travel and tourism (in Bulgaria and abroad) were also mentioned as preferred leisure activity/opportunities. Most of the women expressed a desire and a preference to travel around the country during the weekends as their leisure appeared to be constrained mostly by their work. See Table 20 for the different types of travel and tourism related leisure opportunities.

Table 20: Travel and tourism types of leisure pursuits

Sub-category	Particular Quotation
'get out of the city'	<p><i>... In the weekends, I prefer to go somewhere outside of the city. Depending on the season, of course. (Angelia)</i></p> <p><i>I also try to get out of the city in the weekend. Waking up somewhere else is quite energizing for me. Travelling is awesome. (Tanya)</i></p>
Work as constraining travel	<i>... Before, I started working I used to travel every weekend, I mean every weekend I tried to get out of Sofia. Now, In the weekends, it depends on the season, but mostly, I'd like to be with my boyfriend, travelling somewhere. (Daniela)</i>
Travel with a romantic partner	
Love for the outdoors and camping	<i>I love nature, recharge your batteries when you're in the outdoors. Going camping, at the seaside or in the mountains; all that is different from the all-inclusive deals. What we still do is go the most remote and wild places. That's what I want, a place with untouched, pristine nature. (Boyana)</i>
Wish to travel more	<i>If I had more time and more money, I would travel more and get out more; that's very important for me because this is how I rest and get back into balance. (Savina)</i>
Travel and tourism is preferred leisure instead of city leisure	<i>I love to travel, in Bulgaria and abroad. In the past four months, I've been working a lot and I couldn't get out of Sofia for the weekend, which is what I normally do. Depending on the season, but from May till September we would go somewhere at the seaside, and in the winter time, either to the mountains or just a day trip somewhere. It's not a specific place, but somewhere outside of Sofia.. I wish I could have at least a month off per year, I mean I want to have all my holiday days off at once so that I can leave Sofia and not come back for a long time. It's also important for me to travel abroad too at least once a year. (Maria)</i>

Source: Author's work

Depending on the time of year, Angelia and Tanya talked about 'getting out of the city' as a preferred leisure option. Daniela expressed a desire to resume an activity she stopped engaging in because of work and shared her wish to travel with her partner. Love of nature and the outdoors seemed to motivate Boyana who preferred to travel to the mountains and the more isolated places to 'recharge her batteries'. Savina wished she could travel more in the future as she seemed financially constrained at that time. Finally, Maria's travel and tourism related leisure also seemed to be constrained by her work, as she preferred 'out of the city' type of leisure.

Secondly, the social settings and physical locations regarded as 'containers' of Sofian women's leisure are shown in this section. As the travel and tourism ones have already been presented, this section shows the references made by the women in terms of urban leisure. The city parks and gardens (coded park life) were often mentioned as a preferred space/place of leisure in the spring and summer and have also been already discussed. Furthermore, the theatre, the cinema and events were mentioned by some of the interviewees. For example, Victoria was one of the women who talked about going to the cinema as a way to socialise:

Victoria:...Oh yeah, one of my favourite things is going to the cinema, European cinema especially. I have spent countless hours in 'Dom na Kinoto' cinema centre, where I usually meet a bunch of art people. I also like art events and festivals. I like talking to the artists, some of them make handmade stuff and jewellery, which I love. They are interesting people...

Similarly, Sasha talked about her leisure and cited the cinema among other leisure activities typical for the city environment.

Sasha:... For me leisure is doing stuff that is of interest and importance to me in one way or another. For example, that includes dancing, sports, going to the cinema and the theater, attending music events with friends... things that bring me joy, excitement and pleasure.

In summation, the containers/opportunities discussed in this section feature: a) going out; b) seasonal leisure; and c) travel and tourism. These are essential components of the meanings the interviewed women attach to their leisure. Here they are seen either as freely chosen and self-determined or as constrained aspects of women's leisure. In other words, although each woman is considered to be relatively free to choose the type of activity, the leisure setting or the physical location of leisure, there are also some wider, localised constraints that influence their choices. The next sub-section focuses on some of the constraints.

6.2.4 Negotiated Constraints on Sofian Women's leisure

Another vital aspect of understanding these Sofian women's leisure meanings is the analysis of constraints on women's leisure. This section presents the findings about women's perceptions about the different kinds of constraints they face in their daily lives. The negotiated constraints theme consists of four sub-themes: temporal constraints, economic constraints, lack of opportunities and the 'ethic of care' derived from the data.

Firstly, women were asked to state their occupation and how many hours they work per week. Table 21 shows the approximate time women spend in paid work in their respective occupations. The analysis and interpretation of these answers, along with some women's conceptualisation of leisure, resulted in the conclusion that most of these Sofian women experienced temporal constraints on leisure. Furthermore, some women claimed economic constraints and, surprisingly, lack of opportunities was not mentioned at all. On the contrary, most women seem to believe that there are more opportunities for leisure (mostly in terms of access to sport facilities) compared to the past. The 'ethic of care' is also seen to constrain leisure in the form of perpetuation of the ideology of familism, and the caregiving role of women. The different constraints are examined further in this sub-section.

Table 21: Women's occupation and time spend in paid work

Pseudonym of interviewees	Occupation (as described by participant)	Hours spend in paid work (per week)
Paula	<i>I work as an office manager and, I do all kinds of administrative work.</i>	<i>40 h per week. The standard in Bulgaria, everyone works at least 40 h per week.</i>
Maria	<i>I am a solicitor and a legal advisor for a firm that organises gambling games and lotteries.</i>	<i>More then 40, maybe even 50/55 per week. I say at least two more hours after the official working hours, which is a lot.</i>
Victoria	<i>Now I'm a project management assistant</i>	<i>Officially, I work 8 h per day. From 9 am till 6 pm, but often I stay after hours. The overtime is not paid...</i>

Nikol	<i>I am sales expert at an electricity providing company</i>	<i>Normally, I work 40 hours. The usual working hours are from 9 am till 5 pm. Often, I stay after 5 pm though... but normally they don't pay overtime.</i>
Sasha	<i>I work as a PR and advertisement consultant, in a company that organises music event.</i>	<i>Normally, I work 40 hours per week, and I have overtime when there is an event going on or we're organising it. I work Saturday and Sunday sometimes and that is not paid.</i>
Kalina	<i>I work as an order manager in HP.</i>	<i>40 per week. And sometimes I do the holiday shifts because we work with other international companies and it is inevitable, sometimes we have to work at Christmas or Easter and so on.</i>
Savina	<i>I am an administrator for a construction firm that deals with projects within the energy sector.</i>	<i>I normally work 40 hours per week. I stay after work from time to time. If there is a deadline that needs to be met, I have to stay after hours.</i>
Boyana	<i>I work in the French Cultural Institute in Sofia. It's been six years now. I work in the communications department.</i>	<i>That depends, if we have an event, up to 55 hours per week. I don't really know but more than the standard 40 hours for sure. That time is not paid, unfortunately. If I work Saturday or Sunday then these hours are paid.</i>
Tanya	<i>I work in the sphere of public relations. I'm an accounts manager.</i>	<i>Minimum 40 hours per week, sometimes I work more than that. That depends to a great extent on the type of work that has to be done, and the way it's organised.</i>
Daniela	<i>I'm an attorney-at-law.</i>	<i>More than 40 for sure.</i>
Anna	<i>Now I'm a PR expert for Bulgaria, Albania and Macedonia in a cosmetics company.</i>	<i>40 +, but not too much anymore.</i>
Maya	<i>I'm an architect.</i>	<i>Officially 40 hours per week. Unofficially 50-60 hours per week. This is because we're a small team and the organisation within the firm is not good.</i>
Angelia	<i>I work in the HR department of a company. I mainly do administrative work</i>	<i>40 h per week. I rarely work overtime, because it is not paid and I as soon as it get 6 pm, I'm off.</i>
Sveltana	<i>I work as a media analyst in a foreign-owned company.</i>	<i>According to the contract 40 hours per week, but surely more than that. It's not a habit of mine to stay after work every day, but it happens from time to time.</i>
Ivanka	<i>I'm an investigating police officer</i>	<i>Officially 40 hours per week. However, we're also working additional shifts during the week or during the weekends. These shifts can last maximum of 24 hours, and they are paid in addition to our salary. An officer can work a couple of these per month.</i>

Source: Author's work

Almost all interviewees, regardless of their occupation, claimed to commit more than 40 hours per week to paid work, with some women claiming up to 60 hours per week. Most women, with the exception of Angelia, often stayed after hours, even though their employers did not pay overtime. Some women worked even during the weekend, which was usually unpaid too. Another exception was Ivanka, whose profession allowed additional shifts that were paid. Judging from the references in Table 21, it is possible to claim that these Sofian women were disadvantaged with regards to time for leisure due to personal commitment to their employment. In fact, some women use work to define their leisure in terms of unobligated left-over time, for example:

Ivanka: ... My leisure is the time I'm not working. I mean, besides the extra shifts, from Monday to Friday from 5.30 pm onwards and in the weekends.

Daniela, Nikol and Maria whose leisure is structured and influenced by their paid work expressed similar views:

Daniela: ... Well, I've got two days off work per week, which I consider leisure and after work during the week as well.... even though during the week, time after work is rarely free, you know...

Nikol: ... My leisure is very structured. I know what I'm going to do every day. I go to work, then after work I need to get groceries, have dinner, maybe browse social media before bed and that's it... the same thing the next day.

Maria: ... For me that's all the time I'm off work. I don't have much leisure time, though... I'm too busy at work sometimes...

Clearly, the temporal constraints appeared to be a major factor that influenced meanings of leisure in terms of leisure conceptualisation, and developing a pattern for structured leisure time. What is more, some women thought that it was impossible to have more leisure when in full-time employment:

Paula:... If I want to have more leisure time... well, nowadays that is not possible... to have more leisure time, in my view... If I want more leisure, I would have to change my job. But even then, I don't think that would help because the new job will probably take up even more time than the present one...

It would appear that the longer hours in the workplace have a negative impact on other aspects of full-time employed women's lives, regardless of their life situation or occupation. For some women, the additional work hours meant that their leisure was quite structured and for others it influenced the allocation of time for unpaid work (household and child-care responsibilities) within their time for leisure. Additionally, the notion of longer hours in the workplace appeared to affect some women's perception of employment as constraining and even oppressive.

Furthermore, only one woman reported economic constraints as barriers to leisure engagement and participation, even though her profession as a police investigator allowed additional income through extra shifts. This claim appeared unusual as a lack of leisure due to time limitations would have been more logical constraint. Still Ivanka stated:

Ivanka:...Nowadays, money is the thing that matters the most in relation to leisure, I reckon. If I earned more money, in the first place I would do more interesting things in my leisure. For example, I finish work at 5.30 pm; I could go to Vitosha to snowboard at 6 pm, just in time for the evening sessions. I could go every night if I wanted to.

In contrast to Ivanka, who appeared unsatisfied with her salary, Daniela appeared content with it and spent a lot on leisure:

Daniela:...Most of my money go to leisure pursuits and experiences. I tend to spend a lot of money for leisure...I like earning my own money and spending it as I wish. So, at this point I'm happy with what I do.

Although economic constraints are generally cited as a barrier to participation because of women's lack of economic power and lower earnings compared to men, only one participant stated money as a constraining factor. Moreover, that person can be considered as a member of a higher level occupation, which assumes a higher wage too.

Similarly, lack of opportunities or facilities were not reported as constraining leisure, on the contrary, in Savina's opinion, there are plenty of opportunities for leisure and sport in particular:

Savina:... We play sports and engage in sport activities much more than them [*our parents*]. I'm not sure if it's going to stay that way, but there are much more opportunities for us to get into sports that there used to be. Now there are many more opportunities to get into sport in the city and not just to train and become a professional athlete but for amateurs too. I remember when I was younger, I used to practise volleyball and it was always about being a professional athlete, now I can play just for the sake of playing. I think that was the case with most people at the time, you either train or become a professional athlete or you don't train at all. Now, there are a lot of leisure centres that are available for the sport enthusiasts and there is demand for facilities too. All classes are full... dancing, or yoga or volleyball or badminton or whatever. These are all working people too...

Savina believed that there was an increase in leisure opportunities and new sport facilities were available for people in full-time employment as opposed to the early years of the 'transition' (the early post-totalitarian years). Her view being that in the past sport activities were only practices as a profession and not as a hobby or leisure activity because of lack of facilities and opportunities.

Furthermore, along with these 'objective' constraints (e.g., money, time and facilities) the 'ethic of care' was identified as a 'subjective/gender' constraint. Evidence of the 'ethic of care' can also be found in the way the some participants conceptualised their leisure and the way some viewed it in simply as the absence of work, housework and childbearing responsibilities. For example, Paula's leisure (as a single mother in full-time employment) is constrained by the care for her child and that is how she defines leisure:

Paula: ...For me leisure is doing what I want, without having to worry about other people. I mean, not being dependent on anybody in this period of time. Not caring about the circumstances, it's my time.

As the primary caregiver in her family, her access to time on her own is limited but she did not feel unentitled, on the contrary she declared it – 'it's my time'. In addition to her view of her leisure is constrained by paid work and care for her child, Paula expressed anger about women's role and position in society as well:

Paula:... Primary role? All of her roles are primary in my view? It's not like in the past. Women's role was cooking and cleaning, doing the laundry and

serving. I mean, all her roles are primary nowadays. Going to work, raising the children... all of these things are primary. A woman has to prioritise sometimes but I don't think there is a main role. I don't think we're still a patriarchal society.

Stefanl: What do you mean by that?

Paula:... I mean, women are heads of the family nowadays. We do all the work, not men.

Paula's case is an interesting example, because her family commitment reifies her primary role as a mother/caregiver. However, the 'ethic of care' is generally associated with lack of entitlement to leisure, which is not present in this case. On the contrary, it can be argued that Paula's 'we do all the work' attitude comes from a place of self-assertion, rather than constraint. In conclusion, this attitude can be interpreted as an attempt to resist the ideology of familism. This aspect is further considered in section 6.2.6 Leisure as resistance.

6.2.5 Leisure as a social restraint/constraining

Here, instead of elaborating on the temporal, economic or other 'subjective/gendered' constraints to women's leisure, the focus is on how participation in certain types of activities (or the nature of these activities) positions women at a social disadvantage or reinforces gender stereotypes and gender inequality. There were two main themes that emerged from the data, related to the notion of 'leisure as constraining' or 'leisure as a social restraint' that were associated with the socio-cultural discourses of maleness and femaleness within the broader Bulgarian society:

- *women's perceptions of socially appropriate/inappropriate leisure*
- *women's assumptions about the traditional notions/discourses of femininity*

Women's perceptions about leisure were divided into two opposing views: androgynous leisure (i.e., not clearly male or female) and gendered leisure (meaning leisure is perceived differently by women and men because of their roles and position in society).

Some participants like Angelia held the opinion that leisure has become more androgynous in comparison to the past, and women are not that disadvantaged or constrained in their leisure. In other words, she rejected gender as a characterising factor of leisure choice:

Angelia:... I do not think there is gender-appropriate leisure. I think we live in a society in which men go to Pilates classes and women do kickboxing. I think anyone can do whatever he or she pleases.

Victoria shared a similar belief about androgynous leisure:

Victoria:... I think that Sofian society is increasingly becoming more and more androgynous. Women do men's stuff, although not that often and the other way around, men go to the hair salon and do their hair and nails and, so on...

Even though some women believed that leisure is becoming more androgynous and 'women do men's stuff...and the other way around'. The prevailing view was that women and men perceived leisure differently and they had different types of leisure. Most confirmed the idea that men and women have different perceptions of leisure, mostly because women's leisure included housework and family responsibility unlike men's. Thus, some women felt constrained because of lack of unobligated time which resulted in a leisure gap. Below only a few of the examples of some women's views on the differences in leisure time and participation are presented:

Ivanka:... I think there is a difference, yes. When a woman comes back from work, she needs to do the chores and they are done during her leisure, while a man can go for a pint in the pub, or go play football or whatever. That so unfair, don't you think.

Daniela:...Yes, there is a difference. For example, my boyfriend's leisure mainly comprises of playing video games and watching TV, lying in bed and doing nothing. In my leisure, I would clean up the flat, tidy up a bit, and then I can chill. I wonder is this going to change... ever?

Paula:...There is a difference, yes. Even though I hate doing house chores, I do them in my leisure time and he never does. I mean, if I make him do it, he'll do it, but he'll never initiate it himself. I am always the one that has to say it a couple of times, so that it would get done. I mean, in my leisure time, on top of trying to get some rest, I must do the washing, dry the clothes off, then fold them and put them in place.

Maya: If a man had made plans after work, he'll leave in time, and would rarely stay after work. Women are the worker bees, and I think that lately, women have become manlier... I'd definitely say that men spend their time mostly avoiding things women do like shopping or manicure and pedicure and so on.... Every woman will think about changing the sheets, doing the laundry and vacuum cleaning the apartment, while I've never met a guy, even the most clean ones that would make plans to do these things.

All of the above views have one theme in common, and that is that women's and men's leisure is different because women are generally more constrained by their housework responsibilities. This view was discussed previously as well when women talked about the value of leisure in their lives. These opinions, however, are conceivably related to internalised perceptions about stereotypical gender-appropriate leisure and social norms, values and perceptions about femininity. For example, Anna and Savina provide their opinions about appropriate leisure practices (and sports) and stereotypical notions of feminine and masculine traits:

Anna:... Dancing and yoga are considered female activities... although in my yoga class there are a few men, which was a pleasant surprise. I guess this is more visible in sports, not so much in other leisure activities, which are more balanced in this regard. For example, in my mom's cooking course the ratio of men to women was almost equal.

Savina:... I don't think there is a big difference between men and women. Everything depends on the person's personal choice and organisation. I personally think that men are much more organised than women and they succeed in managing their time much better than women.

These comments revealed that some women internalise the traditional, normative male and female assumptions in all spheres of life. Another example, which suggests an internalisation of gender roles and stereotypical gender assumptions, was expressed by Paula:

Paula: ...I don't think there is gender-appropriate leisure. It's just that some activities suit women better than men and the other way around. I mean, today, women do everything like men, men have become metrosexual and do stuff like women, but I think that some activities suit women better than men. For example, I consider women that box to be very unfeminine. Now, I realise I contradict myself because I want to try boxing, but women who are boxing or

kickboxing or weightlifting are not aesthetically appealing to me. I think from an aesthetic point of view these are not for women. Similarly, women who fix cars and work in a garage, I mean, I accept it but it's strange to me, I think this is a job that would suit a man better. And men, I don't know. I don't think they do women's jobs.

It is possible to argue that Paula's internal dilemma comes from the opposition between personal desire/agency and the social norm. She agreed with the perspective expressed by other women that nowadays leisure has become more androgynous; but held a more traditional view about femininity. She appeared constrained not so much by 'objective' constraints but by society's categorisation of sports into female-and male-appropriate. Her perceptions of aesthetics and physical attractiveness seemed guided by internalised, essentialist, heteronormative assumptions of femininity.

In a similar vein, along with leisure appropriate for women, there were some leisure pursuits/activities that women themselves and others considered inappropriate for women because they challenged the normative gendered discourses of femininity. For instance, contemporary hobbies or sport-like activities like pole dancing or new forms of dating, such as technology assisted dating, are considered by women themselves and by society as unsuitable or inappropriate for women.

Savina:... I guess if I did online dating I would not tell everybody about it., I'd definitely hide it. Fortunately, I don't do it. I wouldn't share this because the general opinion about women using these sites is very bad. I think that people will get the wrong impression about me if I tell them I'm going on dating sites, especially my colleagues from work.

Savina's negative view about online dating is interpreted here along the general assumption that women who use online dating applications or services are probably unable to secure a date through 'normal' face-to-face interaction and therefore there is probably something wrong with them. It is generally presumed that women resort to online dating as a final option to secure a mate in order to avoid the stigmatization of being a single woman. This assumption is consistent with the narrow, archaic views about women's sexuality, morality and the validation of 'women's worth' in relation to men.

In the same way, Svetlana's reluctance to sign up for a pole dancing class seemed to be influenced by the inappropriateness of the activity for women or the negative connotation it exuded:

Svetlana:... I was talking to my friend the other day and we both hold the opinion that if we decide to sign up for pole dancing classes that would be deemed very inappropriate by others. We would sign up purely to get fit and not to actually strip, but if we do sign up, that would be our little secret. You know how people are, they always think the worst, and they'll be like, oh look at these too, strippers... this and that... although, we're obviously doing it for a completely different reason. Anyways, people will always be like that...

Although performers are trying to change peoples' perception of pole dancing and promote it as a non-sexual form of leisure and a competitive sport activity, it is still considered as controversial and misunderstood because the widespread association of pole dancing with stripping and night clubs and not that much as a performance art that incorporates physical fitness, dance and acrobatics.

Moreover, stereotypical gendered leisure and views about 'proper' femininity and masculinity were revealed when women were asked about their views on gender-appropriate leisure. Sports were the leisure activities that some women believed are still gender segregated and gender stereotypes prevailed. The citations below show some women's views on sports and gender:

Ivanka:... Boxing, for example, is still considered inappropriate for women, unlike Tai Bo. In a Sofian gym, if you go to a Tai Bo class, there are pretty much only woman attending. I guess this applies to gymnastics too... I'm sorry but, watching a gay man in a leotard will literally make my eyes bleed. Same goes for ballet too. That's just me I guess.

Tanya:... Yeah, I think that some sports are gender-segregated. I mean, of course, there are women who box and lift weights but it's not that common; the same is true for gymnastics and men, for example. I don't think there is something wrong with either, it's just the way it is.

Ivanka's assumptions about sports are inherently gender-stereotypical and heteronormative. In fact, her categorisation of sports into female or male correlates with the traditional

normative ideas about masculinity and femininity and the ways gender is developed, exhibited and reproduced through sport. Thus, gymnastics is considered female-appropriate sport, so, a man who practises the sport is perceived as feminine, non-aesthetically pleasing and therefore homosexual (i.e., they do not exhibit the traditional masculine traits of strength and physical fitness and they do not participate in male-appropriate sports). Ivanka did not seem to challenge the traditional views about gender and leisure. Similarly, Tanya shared the view that in general sports are gender-segregated but seemed content with the situation. Anna and Daniela gave examples of football as a male-only sport, which is another example of sports as a site and arena of production and reproduction of gendered stereotypes:

Anna:... In Bulgaria, for example, football is only for men. I have never seen girls play football, either professionally or just for fun. I have not heard of a female football club either, even if there is one, which I doubt, no one has ever heard of it. This is probably because women who play football do not look like playboy bunnies... or at least that is what most people think...

Daniela: ... Yes, I think football is suitable for men only. I think a woman playing football is absurd. I do not know, I guess spa therapies are mainly for women too; shopping too, I do not know a man who genuinely enjoys shopping...

Anna's comments provided an example what she regards as the sexual objectification of women. She thinks that because women who play football do not fit the ideal of female physical attractiveness, 'women's value' is diminished and thus they are undeserving attention from the public or the media. In Daniela's view, football is unsuitable for women for similar reasons. It makes women look unfeminine, and consequently, unattractive. Daniela's statement is interpreted here as the internalisation of the traditional gendered role discourses.

Finally, Kalina and Sasha voiced the gender-appropriate perspective as well:

Kalina:... I think that there are some sports, like some extreme sports for example, that are manlier, and a woman can get a few awkward stares but they would be more like an expression of admiration than anything else. Aerobics and yoga are practised more by women, that is true.

Sasha:.... I think our society is still largely closed-minded and have different views on what is feminine and what is not. I'm sure there are sports which men consider to be inappropriate for women; they see it as strange or immoral.

In summation, a gender leisure gap exists, according to many participants, and men and women experience and perceive leisure differently mostly because women are still very much constrained by their housework responsibilities, unlike men. Predominantly, heterosexual and heteronormative discourses of femininity and masculinity exist in relation to sports, although some women held beliefs that leisure is getting increasingly gender-neutral and women are not that disadvantaged in leisure. Still, women's own internalisation of gender roles and ideal images of femininity showed evidence of the opposite. In fact, some women were constrained by both their own internalisations of the gendered discourses and ideologies and by the fear of judgement or social rejection as some forms of leisure pursuits (primarily sports and related activities) are seen by women themselves and conceivably by others to be inappropriate for women.

6.2.6 Leisure as resistance

In contrast to the view of women's leisure as constrained comes the argument that through leisure women have the opportunity to resist oppressive gender roles within conditions of relative freedom. In this study, two main themes emerged in support of women's leisure as resistance: a) agency (the belief that leisure is a matter of personal choice, and structural factors are disregarded, which may be considered as a way of asserting personal power); and (b) leisure as freely chosen and self-determined. The leisure-as-empowering notion is based on both leisure as self-determined and the sense of entitlement to it. This section presents the findings that embodied notions of agency (i.e., personal choice, control, self-expression) and self-determination.

a) Agency

The agenic exercise of some of the Sofian women was expressed through their conceptualisation of leisure as time/activity/experience that is of utmost importance to their personal well-being. In section 6.2.1 the perceived values/entitlement to leisure were illustrated. Here, the emphasis is on resistance as a struggle against the institutionalised power and gender ideologies/discourses. For instance, the following statement highlighted the agenic exercise of power in the form of 'work on myself' attitude towards the benefits of leisure:

Svetlana:... For me leisure is time in which you must not do anything for anyone else except yourself. It is time only for yourself and if you really want to do something for another person then that's fine, but for me personally, I'm quite selfish in this regard. I'll rest... I'll do sports, I'll do things that I really want to do in my leisure; work on myself.

The argument for resistance through leisure is also based on individual exercise of personal power and empowerment in the context of relative freedoms (i.e., freely chosen and self-determined leisure). Table 22 shows the particular ways individual women empower themselves by asserting their right of free expression and personal leisure choice. The table shows the sub-categories coded under the agency theme and related exemplifying statements.

Table 22: Women's subjective expressions of personal power through leisure

Sub-categories	Quotations
Showing high skill and proficiency in an activity, which boost self-confidence	<i>... I feel confident when I ski and I like expressing my skills and ability. When I go hiking in the mountains too, although I can't walk as much as I used to as I am not as physically fit as I used to be. I like aerobics too because I feel like I'm doing it for myself as I imagine myself healthy and fit, strong and happy... (Daniela)</i>
Individual skill development	<i>I believe that leisure helps me develop as an individual in different spheres. For example, by engaging in sports and dancing, in particular, I have become more patient and resilient, I've become more confident, not because of my physical appearance but because I see how much better and stronger I've become as a person and that motivates me even more and makes me feel confident. (Sasha)</i>

Cultivating feelings of self-love, positive thinking, self-care	<p><i>... I felt the need to engage in a leisure activity that will not only help me relax but will help me cultivate a healthier way of taking care of myself. I think yoga is perfect for that because it teaches mediation, self-knowledge, and self-love... I'm very emotional and I need stuff like that. (Anna)</i></p> <p><i>Now, I try to cultivate a feeling of self-love and do whatever I want to do, without considering others that much. (Daniela)</i></p>
The freedom to express oneself through leisure	<i>... I think that everything you do is an expression of yourself, be that leisure or work. Whether I go running, or go to a Vietnamese restaurant that's always an expression of my leisure interests and my personality...I'm thankful for that freedom. (Svetlana)</i>
Freedom to express one's sensuality/sexuality	<i>I'd say, going out and dancing are ways I generally express myself. I also like interacting with people, because I'm a communicative, extrovert person, and dancing because they make me feel good and I can express my sensuality. (Anna)</i>

Source: Author's work

It can be argued that these individual women exert their agency by engaging in leisure pursuits that: boost their self-esteem and self-confidence; have the potential for developing useful skills; create opportunities for self-care and opportunities for self-improvement; and allow freedom for self-expression. In other words, do leisure for the sake of their own needs, not the needs of others.

(b) Leisure as freely chosen and self-determined

This sub-section discusses the leisure motivations that may be classified as freely chosen and self-determined by some of the participants. Some women reported that they choose their leisure based on their emotions and mood and in order to 'stay true to themselves':

Ivanka:...I'm very impulsive when it comes to leisure and choosing what to do or how to spend my time...I'm very particular about it too... I want to have a pleasant experience, no matter what I do...

Angelia:... It depends on how I feel. If I want to go out with friends or I want to do something on my own, or I want to hang out with one person only... with a member of my family for instance. As long as I stay true to myself, that's what matters to me.

Kalina:... Most of the time, I just do whatever I feel like doing, but sometimes I try to force myself into doing stuff; for example, crawling out of the house; I don't mind cleaning the house, I like it when its clean and tidy, but going out

on a Saturday... it's difficult. And I used to be such a party animal. [laughs]
Now, I prefer to stay at home. I guess I don't feel like having meaningless conversations with uninteresting people.

Although the three examples refer to different leisure activities and experiences, the rationale for the choice appeared to be the same: women's regard of and respect for their own emotions and mood at the particular moment and their individual understandings about the value and benefits of leisure. Ivanka for instance, said that she often changed her mind about leisure but she was also very particular about it for this reason. Angelia emphasised the importance of staying true to oneself concerning leisure choice. Moreover, Kalina's statement revealed her internal motivation to engage in leisure even if she is not in the mood, suggesting that leisure is of value to her, even if previously she had claimed otherwise.

The theme of self-determined and freely chosen leisure was supported by some women's claims about staying true to oneself and realising that 'work is not everything'. Svetlana made a comparison between work and leisure identities and the importance of 'not losing yourself', by focusing too much on work.

Svetlana:...The satisfaction you get from work and the satisfaction you get from leisure are two very different things. I like what I do and I'm not complaining but leisure is what makes you who you are, and these things need to be in balanced otherwise you lose yourself. I mean you can slave away your life. Work isn't everything but some people do not realise it...

Victoria agrees with this point and adds her view on the importance of balancing work and leisure in everyday life.

Victoria:... It is critical that we realise how important it is in today's world to balance work and leisure the best we can, because it is important for a person to feel good about herself/himself. A person who is exhausted from work is not a productive individual; he can't function properly that is why I try to choose my leisure based on my personal needs, physical and emotional. I felt like this before, it's not pleasant.

In summary, the presence of both themes of agency and leisure as self-determined suggested that some of the interviewed women exercised some form of resistance to the normative gender discourses and ideologies that were expressed through the desire for self-expression, staying true to oneself and satisfying individual needs and wants.

6.3 The Meanings of Work for Sofian Women

In this section, women's subjective conceptualisations of paid work are presented in order to capture the juxtaposition of work and leisure in individual women's lives. Here the findings related to women's subjective occupational problematics within the modern workplace culture are reported. Firstly, the different values associated with paid work are presented, followed by the perceived benefits/outcomes of work and its empowering potential for some women. Secondly, an emergent theme of 'normalisation of non-standard working hours' became visible from the analysis an interpretation of the data. This theme is consistent with previous findings about the temporal constraints of leisure. And finally, some perceived benefits of full-time employment were mentioned in relation to leisure.

6.3.1 Perceived Value of paid work

The interviewed participants expressed various attitudes towards the role, value and benefits of paid work depending on their respective occupations and life situations. Still, there were some common factors that emerged from the data in relation to the meanings of paid work, most noticeably, the correlation between the value of paid work, its related benefits and their combined influences over individual's work satisfaction. Women were asked if they were happy and satisfied with their jobs and if so, what aspects of their work influenced their leisure in a positive way and what aspects they perceived as constraining. The value of paid work for some women appeared to be linked to other aspects of life, including leisure. Table 23 shows the references made to some of the reasons for women's high satisfaction of work and their positive attitude towards it. Some women pointed out the reasons why they are content with their occupations at the time.

a) Aspects contributing to higher level of work satisfaction

Table 23: Positive aspects of paid work that affect the overall work satisfaction

Category: positive aspects of paid work contributing to the overall work satisfaction	Particular Quotations
type/nature of the work	<p><i>Yes, I really like working for the police. I investigate all sorts of criminal offences, like breaking and entering, auto theft, robberies, possession and distribution of illegal drugs... I do not deal with the white collar crimes. I like the type of work... (Ivanka)</i></p> <p><i>Yes, I'm happy with my job. I do like it, because it is never boring; in a nutshell I work in the supply chain that deals with client's orders. For example someone buys a server from HP and of course HP would offer them a support contract, my job is to make sure the client has access to all the parts he needs if there is a fault with the server. I locate the spare parts and make sure they are delivered to the relevant warehouse, from where they are delivered to the client. So, yeah, I'm satisfied with my job. The team I work with is great and that reduces the stress and tension at the workplace. (Kalina)</i></p> <p><i>Yeah, I'm happy with my job.. it's quite interesting. I communicate with the press, and the journalists, I work with the advertising agencies, I do PR related work, it's quite intriguing and I work with cool people. All my colleagues are quite cool. (Sasha)</i></p>
Work is more satisfying because it's linked to higher education qualification and personal interests	<p><i>Yes, I'm happy with my job. Back when we were supposed to apply to university, I wanted to study something that is interesting and enjoyable. I chose PR because it includes other disciplines as well, like psychology and sociology. It's a dynamic field and its connected to other different fields, which I thought would be great for me. I got in, and studied PR and now that's my profession. (Tanya)</i></p> <p><i>In general, yeah, I'm happy with my job, because it's quite interesting and I do love it. I meet interesting people from the business and the art spheres on a daily basis, and that is interesting and exciting. (Boyana.)</i></p> <p><i>As I'm still at an entry level position and I'm still learning the basics but I like it, yes. I did my MSc dissertation on renewable energy resources in Bulgaria and the development of this sector, so, I really wanted to get a job that is in this sphere...and I did. (Savina)</i></p>

<p>Work is intense and demanding in various aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - workload - dealing with clients - dealing with red tape - emotional investment from the individual <p>but is important to the individual in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -self-satisfaction - increase self-esteem 	<p><i>I'm happy though because I'm good at that I do, and I'm successful, which makes e feel good about myself... At the moment the workload is a lot so I need to stay after work to finish some stuff but that's goanna change soon I hope. As a whole, since I'm in this company I do have leisure, it has increased in terms of time, and I'm happy about that. (Anna)</i></p> <p><i>I, personally, am a perfectionist and I always give a 100% of myself for work, on top of that the position itself is a demanding one with a lot of responsibilities and huge workload.... For example, at the moment we're working on organising the first Bulgarian art exhibition in the Louvre in Paris. That's one of the biggest projects we have ever had and requires so much effort. Approximately four million people will be able to see Bulgarian antiques at the Louvre and this is an incredible opportunity to promote Bulgaria as a cultural tourism destination and so much more. This project is very important to me, personally, because I see how good it will be for Bulgaria's image. That is why I give all of me and I do everything in my power so that it's a successful one. It is the most important thing for me at the moment. So until September 2015 my leisure will include doing the laundry, and getting enough sleep, and that's it. After that I, hopefully, it will get better. (Boyana)</i></p> <p><i>Another thing is the dynamic nature of the work. It changes constantly and sometimes you have hard time following what's going on. The clients are difficult to deal with. Some don't know anything about the work process and they are being difficult. Some are just plain dumb. This is so tiring. All day long you think about other people's problems and tend to neglect yourself and your needs. (Tanya)</i></p>
<p>Opportunities for professional development</p>	<p><i>In my present job, my leisure is less than before; I used to have much more leisure in my previous job. I could plan my trips and I could go to work late and leave early. On the other hand, this led me to a kind of comfort zone and I became lazy and unwilling to develop in a professional aspect, that's why I changed my job, so now it's quite busy at work and the work load is much more, but for now I don't see it as a big deal. (Maria)</i></p>

Work as rewarding and fulfilling and inspires a sense of self-worth	<p><i>I'm happy though because I'm good at what I do, and I'm successful, which makes me feel good about myself... When I must attend an event after work that is one way in which it prevents me from having leisure. This does not happen often though. For instance, we had an event that was scheduled for a Sunday morning and I was part of the team. It was a charity event, you know, it was for a good cause, a cause I believe in, and I worked very hard on organisation and planning. I was excited about it, but at the same time, I was so nervous that it won't be a success and we won't earn enough money. That would have been embarrassing. My desire to help and do my job was equally strong. So, for me this is how work and leisure mix, and I'm not saying that's a bad thing. I couldn't go out the previous night because of the event, but that was a small price to pay. After all, the event was successful and I was happy. It felt good to help, and to be able to help. (Anna)</i></p> <p><i>... the people I work with are cool, I like the sphere of event managements, it's exciting for me. I feel like what I do matters. For example, we organised Depeche Mode's concert in Sofia and it was incredible, the feeling of having just a small part in organising and putting up such a huge event is just unbelievable. Another example that made me feel awesome was when my parents actually thanked me for bringing Pink Floyd to Sofia and organising the concert. They are my parents' favourite band and I was happy to make them happy. It's inspiring. (Sasha)</i></p>
Good employer	<p><i>A big plus of my job is also the fact that my employers encourage me to do my own thing and study more, because otherwise it would have been a nightmare. For example, last semester I had to take three weeks off work to do a project for uni. (Maya)</i></p> <p><i>The positives are that I work at a modern, progressive firm with all its perks; we work with the latest software and programs which makes work easier; the team I work with is great, my colleagues are cool, all of them; the work itself is not difficult, it's easily done, I don't mind that it is quite repetitive; the salary is also good; I work in English, which I enjoy too. (Kalina)</i></p>
'Being your own boss'	<p><i>...I don't have a boss, I mean a manager to stress me out all the time... No, I don't have one of those. I have relative freedom as far as work is concerned and that's great. (Victoria)</i></p>

Source: Author's work

The level of overall work satisfaction for most interviewees depended on a variety of factors. For Ivanka, the nature of the employment and whether or not it was fulfilling enough appeared crucially important aspect. She claimed that she loved working for the police, despite the unfavourable working conditions within her department. Some women, working in the PR spheres and the public sector, expressed satisfaction with work, whenever work was linked to their personal interest (art, law, social relations, etc.). Moreover, women whose educational qualifications progressed into career paths claimed high level of job satisfaction.

In addition, even though some women perceived the work process as repetitive, uninteresting and straightforward their overall satisfaction with work was high because stress was reduced proportionally. Others claimed that even though their jobs were too demanding, because of additional workload or increased emotional involvement, they were happy and satisfied with their jobs because they perceived themselves as being good at what they did. For instance, Boyana's emotional investment became increasingly demanding and spilled over into her time off. Still, she perceived it as part of the job and was filled with a sense of self-worth and accomplishment. It can be concluded that for most of the interviewed women work had an important, central role that was nonetheless constraining their leisure mostly by spilling into leisure time. Similarly, for Maria, professional development seemed to be a priority as she claimed that falling into a 'comfort zone' made her 'lazy' and unwilling to progress within her field. She had more leisure at her previous job, but was dissatisfied with the nature of the work, so she chose a more demanding work position in order to advance her career. Anna and Sasha were both pleased with their employment as it entailed organising events that have a positive impact on the community. Their work was praised and appreciated by their family and friends, which increased their individual sense of achievement and self-worth. Finally, Maya seemed happy with her employer who encouraged her to pursue further educational goals and Victoria seemed to appreciate the relative freedom at work in terms of lack of direct supervision.

b) Aspects contributing to lower level of paid work satisfaction

Some perceived negative aspects/sides of women's jobs or professions that created a lower degree of satisfaction with work were discussed by the interviewees as well. Table 24 shows the categories coded 'negative aspects of their paid work' and related references made to each category.

Table 24: Negative aspects of employment that affect work satisfaction and consequently leisure

Subjective negative aspects of paid work	Particular Quotations
Bad rapport with work colleagues	<i>... Of course, from time to time, I want to send them all to hell because some of my colleagues assume that they are the boss of me, which they are not, and that drives me crazy. (Maya)</i>
Demotivation because of lack of work	<i>... There are times when I don't have so much work and I feel demotivated by that. (Savina)</i>
Displeased with work conditions	<i>I like the type of work; I don't like the work conditions though; our budget is very low and we need to get our own supplies; I've brought my own chair in the precinct and I've painted the walls of my room by myself and at my own expense. Unfortunately, we're nothing like the CSI TV show (Ivanka)</i>
Overall dissatisfaction with the type of work/job/profession	<i>No, I'm not happy with my work. First of all, because I've been working there for six years and I don't want to work this type of work anymore. I don't want to work at this place, with these people... I think that if I had a different, more exciting job, that I would have been able to express myself...(Paula)</i>
Fixed working hours	<i>I don't like the concept of the fixed working week. That structured time, drives me crazy... (Tanya)</i> <i>I think maybe if I had my own business, then I could decide for myself when to have leisure and when to work. The fact that I have fixed working hours is a bit traumatizing for me. (Savina)</i>
Lack of professional development	<i>The biggest downside is the fact that I'm bored at work, this affects me the most. I have no professional perspectives or development. I hate the fact that I don't have any goals to strive for. (Paula)</i>
Being compelled to prioritising work over personal well-being/leisure	<i>Unfortunately, I'm now convinced that this work is taking more from me than it is supposed to... I neglect myself because I'm too busy. Most of the time I put work first and everything else is secondary... but there should be balance between both... Often the day is so busy that I hardly have time to do my own stuff. Check out a tourism site or do some online shopping. I started listing my own personal things in a to do list because I forget that I have a dentist appointment or a hairdresser's appointment or whatever. (Tanya)</i>

<p>Staying after hours;</p> <p>Working during the weekend</p>	<p><i>A negative aspect of my work is that the we're not the ones who set the deadlines for the projects and sometimes the workload is so much that I have to stay after work in order to manage... So, that is bad for my free time and leisure because I can't go out after work, for example. (Savina)</i></p> <p><i>... sometimes I need to work during the weekends, say if I have a deadline or something urgent had come up I have do get on with it, even in my time off. (Boyana)</i></p> <p><i>There are events outside work, which are work-related and I have to be there, which sometimes is annoying as I can't make other plans, if the event is during the weekend. That is not all bad, of course...(Tanya)</i></p> <p><i>... a negative aspect is that the we're not the ones who set the deadlines for the projects and sometimes the workload is so much that I have to stay after work in order to manage... (Savina)</i></p> <p><i>As I work with people from abroad, sometimes I must stay after hours because of the time difference. When there is work to be done, I must do it, and this messes up my own plans sometimes... (Sasha)</i></p>
Some 'risks of the profession'	<p><i>A negative thing for me is the dynamic nature of the work. It changes constantly and sometimes you have hard time following what's going on. The clients are difficult to deal with too. Some don't know anything about the work process and are often insolent and demanding. Some are just plain dumb. This is so tiring. All day long you think about other people's problems and tend to neglect yourself and your needs.(Tanya)</i></p>
Uneven workload among colleagues	<p><i>Another thing is the amount of work I'm able to do in comparison to my colleagues. I mean, it's obvious that I'm doing much more work than them and nobody cares, I hate that. This affects my leisure in terms of being tired and unresponsive at the end of the day. As I'm the type of person who is quite responsible and I would not leave unfinished work tasks for the next day, towards the end of the day I'm the most tired person in the whole team and naturally the only thing I want to do after work is go to bed. (Svetlana)</i></p>
Unpaid overtime	<p><i>We work too much overtime which is not paid. (Maya)</i></p> <p><i>Normally, I work 40 hours per week, and I have overtime when there is an event going on or we're organising it. I work Saturday and Sunday sometimes and that is not paid. (Sasha)</i></p> <p><i>The overtime is not paid extra, which is not great. I used to work with a 10 am – 4 pm work schedule, which was great, but that job was not paid as well as this one. (Victoria)</i></p>

<p>Work is boring, monotonous and repetitive</p>	<p><i>... A negative is definitely the sameness of the work, I mean, your only job is to read articles and locate keywords all day long, it's just so tedious, and I'm so demotivated right now. (Svetlana)</i></p> <p><i>Basically, the biggest downside is the fact that I'm bored at work, this affects me the most... (Paula)</i></p> <p><i>However, the type of work is pretty much the same all the time, it's quite monotonous. I sit at the desk the whole day and work on my computer. (Angelia)</i></p> <p><i>... the type of work is quite repetitive and gets boring really quickly. Every day is pretty much the same...it's hard to get through the day sometimes. (Nikol)</i></p>
<p>Work spilling over into leisure</p>	<p><i>... Well, an investigating officer like me never sleeps. I mean, I finish work at 5.30 pm but I'm always on call. It doesn't matter whether I'm on holiday or at home or wherever, I must be easily reached in case there is a situation that needs my attention. We're officers 24/7, that's it. (Ivanka)</i></p> <p><i>When I finished university I could not wait to get a job and have leisure after work and free weekends. Unfortunately, this did not happen... Recently, I don't have leisure time... I seriously don't have any time left. So in the weekends I need to catch up on assignments too. (Maya)</i></p> <p><i>... The communications sphere is always on, things are happening 24/7. You need to be on your toes all the time, following the media and other communication channels and be ready to react and relate everything to your client if a crisis occurs.... On top of that there are events outside work hours which are work-related and you have to be there, which sometimes is annoying as you can't make other plans. That is not all bad, of course. (Tanya)</i></p> <p><i>Firstly, my profession requires you to be well-dressed and groomed, always polite and smiling because you deal with people from all walks of life. This takes a lot of my time and it's exhausting. As soon as I walk out of the flat and I meet someone even remotely linked to my work, it's on. The line between leisure and work is unclear... I'm immersed in my work because even when I'm not working there is always someone who knows you or wants to talk about a potential project and so on... The worst thing is that I think about work constantly. I talk about work all the time and I can't separate myself from it; even at the weekend I think about work, what have we done; what more needs to be done etc. I'm possessed by work, and that's why it's difficult for me and I try to do play more sports so that I get physically tired and get my mind of work at least for a while. (Boyana)</i></p>
<p>Work is stressful</p>	<p><i>Another thing is that at the moment I'm doing all sorts of different things, although they are big projects and the work is quite stressful, at least it's not all the same things over and over. (Anna)</i></p> <p><i>The negative side is that sometimes there is a lot of pressure and stress when you have to do so many important things at the same time. (Daniela)</i></p>

Unmanageable workload	<p><i>The amount of work is just too much. I read on average a hundred articles per day. I dream about TVs and smart devices and iPods and all that. (Svetlana)</i></p> <p><i>My boss often promises that a project will be done within such an impossible deadline that we can hardly manage.... I already said, although I don't like overburdening myself with work, which is not healthy at all. I've worked 20 hours per day, which is horrible.(Maya)</i></p> <p><i>At the moment the workload is a lot so I need to stay after work to finish some stuff but that's goanna change soon, I hope. Generally speaking, since I'm in this company I do have some leisure, it has increased in terms of time, and I'm happy about that... When I was working in a PR agency, I just had to sit there until you I finished the work, which sometimes meant 7, 8 pm, now it still happens but rarely. (Anna)</i></p> <p><i>The negative of course is that I've got so much work that I don't have leisure. Lately, I've been coming home at 8.30 pm, knackered. If I work during the weekend I can't get out of the city. That's from New Years until now, it wasn't that bad before that. Now I'll hire someone to help me. (Maria)</i></p>
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Source: Author's work

Similarly, to the positive aspects, the negative ones varied vis-à-vis women's type of employment and other variables such as time spent at the particular occupation and nature, quality and quantity of workload and occupational responsibilities. Bad rapport with work colleagues; demotivation because of lack of work and dissatisfaction with the working conditions were among the negative aspects that a few interviewees cited as drawbacks affecting their overall work satisfaction. Demotivation because of lack of work was stated by Savina, indicating her preference and desire to carry on a productive work task, that conceivably relate to the overall level of satisfaction as well. Similarly, Paula revealed an overall dissatisfaction with her job that was due to many factors including being bored with the repetitive nature of the work, bad rapport with work colleagues and inability to develop professionally. In fact, the lack of professional development was mentioned by other women as well as an important aspect of their employment. Tanya claimed that her busy work schedule left her unable to take care of personal appointments and arrangements. Similarly, two women expressed discontent with the fixed working hours and the unpaid overtime.

Moreover, the unpaid overtime seemed to be a concern for a most of the interviewed women, who had to work in the weekend without being paid. Svetlana seemed concerned about the uneven workload among colleagues and Tanya and Ivanka talked about some of the 'risks of the profession' such as dealing with clients, and in Ivanka's case dealing with offenders. A couple of women cited work spilling into leisure as a downside of their jobs too. In fact, the spillover of work into leisure was felt by almost all interviewees in different ways. For instance, the nature of Ivanka's job required constant 'stand by' mode, which constrained her leisure as she was compelled to fit in leisure within the short period of time she was not 'on duty'. Maya, Boyana and Tanya's personal interests (in architecture and PR) that had turned into a career path claimed that often the boundary between work and leisure was blurred, as their interests and their work were one and the same. Finally, work overload, which often created stress at the workplace, was widely cited by the women as a negative aspect of their work that influenced work satisfaction.

6.3.2 Perceived benefits/outcomes of paid work

Along with the perceived positive and negative aspects of paid work in relation to overall work–leisure balance, the interviewees commented on the perceived benefits/outcomes of it. Table 25 contains the different benefits claimed by the employed women and the relevant corresponding references. Firstly, most women appeared content with their salaries and expressed overall satisfaction with their respective material situations. One woman stated that she would rather have more leisure than an increase salary, if it entailed more work. Then, a few women claimed that their employment helped boost their self-esteem, similarly to leisure. Others liked the prospect of sociability and creating new contacts through work. Finally, some women reported a great satisfaction with the flexibility of their working hours, which created more opportunities for managing workload and thus affected leisure in a positive way.

Table 25: Perceived benefits/outcomes of paid work

Category:	Typical quotations
Economic well-being	<p><i>Well, I earn enough money to pursue my leisure interests, and that's one of the functions of work I think, a way of subsidizing your leisure choices. (Anna)</i></p> <p><i>This job provides me with financial security. Most of my money go to leisure pursuits and experiences. I tend to spend a lot of money on leisure... I like my work, it's interesting and I enjoy doing it, I like earning my own money and spending them too... So, at this point I'm happy with what I do. (Daniela)</i></p> <p><i>It helps me feel self-sufficient and self-confident. I work and I earn my own money. I feel good about that. (Savina)</i></p> <p><i>The biggest benefit, of course, is the salary. I get enough money and they never delay the payments. That's important because you can calculate how much money you're going to need to go somewhere and when you're going to get it. (Nikol)</i></p> <p><i>The salary in this company is good too, in comparison to other people's salary and the economic situation in Bulgaria, I can't complain. yeah, gives me financial independence. (Victoria)</i></p>
Work affecting self-esteem	<p><i>In the beginning I was happy with the job, every new beginning is exciting, they put me on the firm's biggest client from the very beginning, which was pretty cool, and did miracles for my self-esteem. (Svetlana)</i></p> <p><i>Having in mind that I've been doing it for four years now and I should be bored by now, I still find my work interesting. The dynamic nature of the job gives me strength to cope with various situations and makes me go to work with a confident smile on my face. (Ivanka)</i></p> <p><i>Firstly, the type of work is interesting and dynamic, makes me feel more self-confident, I like doing it because I progress professionally. (Daniela)</i></p> <p><i>Yeah, most of the time, yeah. I'm interested in what I do. I learn new things and this makes me more confident in my skills as an architect. (Maya)</i></p>
Flexible work hours	<p><i>I've got working hours from 9 am till 6 pm but there is no problem if I to go to work at 10 am and stay until 8 pm. Sometimes I'll work on Saturday and I'll take an additional day off on the following weekend. (Svetlana)</i></p> <p><i>I'm now able to control and manage my working hours. if I need to leave at the end of the day on time, I just do it, without hesitating, which is awesome. (Anna)</i></p> <p><i>My work hours are quite flexible too. I mean I can manage my work in a manner that is suitable for me which is great... (Maya)</i></p> <p><i>On the other hand, when it's not that busy at work I can afford to be late or leave earlier... (Sasha)</i></p>

Good rapport with collages	<p><i>... the team consists primarily of young people, which makes communication easier and I do have friends from work, which is nice. I even met my boyfriend there. (Svetlana)</i></p> <p><i>... I learn a lot of new stuff every day, as I'm working in the internal communications sector too, which I did not before. I like working in a big, international company, where the team is also very good. I work with people from all over the world. (Anna)</i></p> <p><i>All my colleagues are quite cool. We go out together sometimes, not too often though. (Sasha)</i></p>
Networking	<p><i>The team I work with consists of young people, which is great.... At my old job most of my colleagues were much older than me and had children and were married. We didn't have anything in common and we didn't talk to each other much. That's not good, because I spend the whole day with them and I could not even talk to. Here is so much better... (Nikol)</i></p> <p><i>I constantly meet new and exciting people; people from all occupations, from bankers and administrative clerks to ministers and even celebrities... (Ivanka)</i></p> <p><i>I like meeting new people, and communicating with these different people make the work more dynamic and not so boring. (Angelia)</i></p> <p><i>I met interesting people, which is helpful, because I can turn to them in the future if necessary; if I need advice or a favour or something like that. (Anna)</i></p> <p><i>I meet interesting people from the business and the art spheres on a daily basis, and that is interesting and exciting. Some of them may become my friends, some might become something more... who knows. (Boyana)</i></p>

Source: Author's work

For some women, a direct benefit/outcome of paid work is the financial well-being and economic independence, which allows women to spend money on leisure. On the other hand, an increase of self-confidence and self-esteem is triggered by their high level of proficiency and enthusiasm to develop professionally. Some of the participants cited the flexibility of their working hours as beneficial to their leisure in terms of managing their workload themselves and leaving the workplace on time. These women seemed to appreciate making their own decisions when it comes to coping with work tasks. Finally, a few women mentioned that they enjoyed the benefit of having good rapport with like-minded colleagues, networking and even formed romantic partnerships at the workplace. Some appreciated the peer group communication and stressed the importance of good rapport with their co-workers.

6.4 Perceptions of Gender Roles and Gender Relations

This section exhibits the findings related to women's perceptions about gender roles and relations in everyday life. The participants talked about their work experiences and gave their opinions about gender roles, equality, women's emancipation, feminism, and the broader society.

6.4.1 Perceptions of femininity and masculinity

Women were asked about their work and if there was anything that they did not like and wished to change. One woman spoke about her attempt to project masculine qualities in the workplace in order to increase her chances for professional development:

Boyana:... In my personal experience behaving like a man in the workplace is a model for success. I tried that for a while and it worked until I realised I can't behave like a man and I can no longer keep up with this charade. I'm a woman and I'm susceptible to a hormonal imbalance, deal with it... I used to behave like a man at work and I got a bit lost... the general assumptions about femininity are that women are supposed to be of mild, easy-going disposition and be humble and obedient and men are the ones who make decisions and fight... I thought that this is the correct way... However, in time, I realised that this is not me. I'm sensitive, intuitive and emotional. I should not try to hide it or run away from it. Wearing a business suit at work won't make me more successful, I can still wear dresses and be smart looking and beautiful. Now, I scream and shout, cry and laugh at work and I don't see why not. This is who I am...

Stereotypical cultural assumptions about femininity and masculinity within the public sphere of employment seemed to influence Boyana's behaviour. For a period of time she conformed to a gender discourse that views work as male-dominated arena in which female employees are unlikely to excel professionally unless they exhibited or emulated masculine traits that are generally perceived as signs of strength and therefore are much more likely to be guaranteed successful career growth. Boyana was the only one who shared her experience but other themes such as motherhood, the nuclear family, discrimination and gender equality, and the nature of gender discrimination surfaced when the women were asked about their opinions on women's position and roles in society. These are revealed below.

a) Motherhood

The theme of motherhood was discussed in relation to the similar themes of family and women's roles:

Svetlana:... I think we're all human beings and if a person is ambitious and wants to pursue a career, his or her gender should not be an issue, in any way. I mean, why would it be. On the other hand, obviously men cannot get pregnant and I'm not saying that women should not give birth; I'm just saying that being a mother is not the only thing that gives women's life a meaning.

Svetlana believed in the economic equality of the sexes and disagreed with the assumption that women's biological function should be prioritised as women's primary role in society – a role that gives meaning and validation to a women's life. Kalina, on the other hand claimed that 'every woman should work' and that 'the most important role of a woman is still to be a mother'. She then elaborated on these claims, giving her account of what motherhood and family life was:

Kalina:... I think, a woman should be smart, most of all. I think that every woman should work too and earn her own money.... On the other hand, I think that the most important roles of a woman is still to be a mother and when I said it earlier, I don't mean in a negative way.... Being a mother and a housewife, who lives in a loving environment, is something wonderful, for me personally; I'm talking about being loved by your husband, having help from parents and relatives, help from the state included; that's all great.

She then commented on what she thought 'the reality' was:

Kalina:... I said it angrily before because in reality women who are mothers and work and take care of the family are often disrespected and unappreciated by their husbands/boyfriends, who complain about their dinner not being hot enough. Unfortunately, it's still like that; I've seen this in my own family, and I dare say that my parents who are both working and quite intelligent people.

Kalina seemed internally conflicted and torn between the idealized and romanticized image of marriage and motherhood (where motherhood and marriage are seen as a source of happiness, love and mutual support) and the contrasting example of her parents' marital

relations. She thought that inequality and stereotypical gender roles are still very much present within contemporary Bulgarian society that favours the nuclear family as its constituent unit. She concluded by suggesting that the old, hegemonic assumptions about gender roles can still be found in contemporary women's lives regardless of social circumstances.

b) 'The irony of emancipation'

The theme 'irony of emancipation' emerged from participants' views about gender equality, women's roles and empowerment in contemporary society. It reflects some women's perceptions about women's position and their understandings of what is like being women in a sexist society.

Although full-time employed women generally believed in the principles of gender equality and considered themselves as having social and political freedoms, there were some inconsistencies in the way some women talked about gender roles and relations that suggested internalisation of the prevailing oppressive gender roles. An example of this is Kalina's contradictory statement about women's roles:

Kalina:... I'd say the role of women in today's society is quite unfavourable. In Bulgaria as a whole, the woman is a mother and a housewife and she must work too. I think that her voice is not heard at all. Maybe if she shouts, she will be heard. Still, I don't think women are being severely discriminated against, as far as I can tell; if somebody wants to be heard or do something, he/she can do it regardless of their gender.

This particular quotation was interpreted as Kalina's perceptions of female emancipation. She believed that women are disadvantaged in the personal and the public sphere, because of their multiple roles, but nevertheless they are relatively free and not 'severely discriminated against'. This self-contradictory statement raises questions about the discriminatory gender discourses that influence women's perceptions of gender equality and freedom within the contemporary Bulgarian society. Consequently, it is argued here that

these discourses perpetuate gender roles that constrain women, because they perpetuate oppressive gender stereotypes of femininity and masculinity.

Similarly, Boyana's conflicting viewpoints about women's role overload and the decreased level of gender discrimination is another contradictory statement that supports the above-stated argument. Boyana claimed that regardless of women's social and political freedoms that women inherited from the totalitarian image of strong women-workers, women's multiple roles turned them into wonder women:

Boyana:... In my view, because of the communist heritage, gender equality is quite prominent in today's society and that is why there are a lot of women in leading positions in Bulgaria. There are a lot of women in politics and in the business sphere. I think in professional aspects, there isn't that much discrimination against women. However, the Bulgarian woman is still a person who does everything: A wonder-woman. She is a worker, a mother, a housewife, basically does everything herself; she is stronger.... And what about men's role...? I don't know... I call it the irony of emancipation...

Boyana's optimistic views about Bulgarian women's participation in the public sphere and her claim that women are not discriminated against stands in contrast with the multiple roles she claimed most women in full-time employment assumed.

A similar self-contradictory opinion and a negative attitude towards the so-called 'women's emancipation' was given by Anna:

Anna:... In my view, a woman has a leading role in Sofian society... I think we're going back to the matriarchy in Bulgaria... women do all the work, have children, take care of the whole household, earn enough money to support the household, and finally listen to their husband's complaints... Sorry, but that is the truth... In the past men were manlier... I think men take advantage of our emancipation, which I reckon is a cruel joke.... Cleaning, for example, is a part of a working woman's leisure; if this woman has a family too, she's the one keeping them all in check, while a working man would go play football with his mates, or have a pint in the pub or have some rest. In the meantime, working women manage the household as well... I mean, they act all macho, but when it comes to actually having shit done, they are neither the stronger ones nor the more successful ones, not to mention being gentleman. So, that's that: the misunderstood emancipation of the Bulgarian woman and the pseudo-machismo of the Bulgarian man...

Anna, claimed that women have a leading role in Bulgarian society, which she reckoned was turning into a 'matriarchy'. She proceeded to number all the things women do in everyday life and said that in her opinion men were taking advantage of this so-called women's 'emancipation'. Anna's view on women's multiple roles shows her attitude towards the reverse power dynamic that she claimed existed in Bulgarian society, which can be interpreted as she put it: 'misunderstood emancipation' which also resulted in the 'pseudo-machismo of the Bulgarian man'.

In summation, self-contradictory statements were made by participants regarding women's roles and position in contemporary Bulgarian society. However, one common interpretation of these views was summarised by one woman in the phrase 'the irony of emancipation'. The meaning of this 'irony' is twofold: it combines post-feminist western understandings of gender relations (i.e., women's economic power had increased and their positions have been made visible in social and cultural settings) and post-totalitarian heritage of 'the triple burden' (i.e., employment, childcare and housework). In other words, it is the belief of some Sofian women that although women are 'doing all the work', which according to some women positions women in a position of power, the reversal of traditional gender roles resulted in 'the pseudo-machismo of the Bulgarian man' and consequently some women's rejection of feminism.

c) Negative attitude towards women's empowerment and feminism

Additionally, the theme of women's empowerment and subjective opinions about feminism were also mentioned in relation to women's work and leisure. For example, some women claimed that they were against women's empowerment:

Daniela:... If I have to be honest, I now try to make myself more feminine, I mean, I'm against women's empowerment and the idea of the strong woman. I want to be pampered and taken care of.

Stefani: Why is that?

Daniela: Because I can cope with 99% of the situations on my own, so can all of my female friends and close ones; women are stronger. However, I don't think a woman needs to cope with it on her own. Dealing with everything on your own, basically deprives men of their role and function in life. That's why, now, I try to behave more girly around my boyfriend. I always try to make him help me with things I can do on my own, so that he knows that he must take care of me, and makes a commitment. Of course, I can cope on my own, but why are we together then? That's why, I try to behave coquettishly and let him take care of me. That's my new life philosophy. Before I was convinced that I can deal with everything and men and women should stand side by side, which in my view is unnecessary...

Daniela's negative attitude towards empowerment streamed from the belief that women (being strong, independent and emancipated) deprive men of their traditional role as protectors, breadwinners and physically and mentally strong providers. She believed in relinquishing her own power in order to prevent her boyfriend from feeling intimidated or threatened by her abilities, which might affect his willingness to make a long-term commitment. Angelia and Maya expressed similar views about traditional gender roles and attitudes towards feminism:

Angelia:... I think everything should be 50/50 in a relationship or a marriage or whatever. If a men works, then it's ok for the woman to be able do the housework or the other way around. Or if both people work they should split the housework equally, otherwise all of these things fall over to the woman. Then feminism... this and that, no I am not a feminist, I just think that everything should be split equally between both parties.

Maya:... I've never been an advocate of feminism although yeah, I'm pro-equality; I'd like to be able to vote and drive a car but I don't think that equality means domination. I'll hit you with a whip and you'll be my slave. I think equality means togetherness. I think that in romantic relationships women should be feminine and men should be masculine.

Angelia's views on marriage and gender relations fall in line with the traditional gender assumptions of men as breadwinners and women as mothers/housewives. Still, she reckoned that in a dual-earner family housework responsibilities should be equality divided between the two partners. Nevertheless, she did not self-identify as a feminist. In the same way, Maya's comment suggested she believed in women's social and political rights but her

conceptualisation of feminism as equal to women's domination over men suggested a misconception of the concepts.

To recap, the meanings of Sofian women's work consist of an assortment of both positive and negative factors that influenced the importance, value and centrality of paid work in women's lives. These factors varied in relation to women's individual life circumstances and occupations. Still, there are some commonalities in the perceived value, and benefits/outcomes of paid work, such as sense of financial well-being and security and increase of confidence and self-esteem among others. Additionally, it can be argued that women's meanings of work and their perspectives of gender roles and relations within society are influenced by the dominant socio-cultural discourses of femininity and masculinity. Women's views about motherhood, gender equality, women's emancipation, empowerment and feminism showed a discrepancy between women's perceptions and internalisation of these ideologies and discourses. Additionally, some general misconceptions and rejection of feminism was noticeable in most of the interviewees. This dismissal was referred to by some women as the 'irony of emancipation'.

6.5 Summary of Key Findings

This chapter presented the immediate interpreted findings to help understand the meanings of paid work and leisure in relation to gender discourses/ideologies across the broader Bulgarian society. In other words, full-time employed women are relatively free to choose their leisure and work, but are also constrained by various, mostly structural constraints, i.e., hegemonic gender discourses of femininity and the restrictive gender roles. Some indications of individual resistance to these constraints were suspected.

a) The meanings of leisure for Sofian women

These Sofian women held various conceptualisations of both work and leisure and principally considered themselves free to choose their leisure and employment. In addition,

most women, although in different social circumstances and occupations, placed high value on leisure in their daily lives. Many references were made to the importance of 'leisure for one's own sake' indicating the salience of leisure for the individual's well-being, as the nature of leisure itself was not considered as important as its inherent benefits/outcomes. In fact, some of the interviewees preferred to have more leisure than an increase in salary if it entailed more work. Some women reported difficulties in trying to balance work and leisure; some women claimed that they considered not having enough leisure a problem; and some felt entitled to it. A sense of guilt was also mentioned by some informants, whenever they engaged in leisure. It can be concluded that for most of the interviewed women leisure is not only of great value, regardless of their occupation and life situation, but they placed high value on leisure as a form of escape, rest and relaxation and source of happiness within the modern work culture, where work is generally considered a predominant life goal.

The perceived benefits/outcomes of leisure also varied for each interviewee in terms of form of activity and/or experience. Still, common themes emerged such as: rest and relaxation; doing nothing; enjoyment, pleasure and happiness; escape from routine and responsibility; healthier way of living and self-love; intellectual development and knowledge; sport and physical activity; and stimulus seeking. These aspects implied that most of the participants craved more leisure as a result of work overload and in some cases the monotony of everyday existence and inability to balance work and leisure. In fact, time spent in unpaid work was cited by almost all interviewed women as constraining their leisure, regardless of women's individual work satisfaction or career goals. This standardisation of unpaid overtime appeared to be a significant problem for most interviewees, which combined with household responsibilities, some women claimed, affected their leisure in a negative way, as they were unable to separate work from leisure. In some cases, women claimed that the nature of their work was so intrusive and overwhelming that they struggled to 'switch from work mindset to leisure'. Still, women did not point out a lack of 'container/opportunities for leisure within the urban environment, on the contrary many women engaged in variety of sport activities,

seasonal travel and tourism and social events and did not feel disadvantaged in terms of facilities within public spaces. Moreover, many informants talked about 'going out' as a preferred leisure experience but expressed differences and similarities of meanings that reflected their individual life situations. A common conception most women agreed upon was that 'going out' is a common type of urban leisure pursuit, which entails socialising and alcohol consumption; the Sofian nightclub culture and other sub-cultures.

As already discussed, the most widely perceived constraint was the temporal one. In addition, even though economic constraints are generally cited as barriers to participation because of women's lack of economic power and lower earnings compared to men, only one Sofian woman stated money as a constraining factor.

Different views and opinions were expressed about leisure as a social restraint/constraining. The women's perceptions about leisure were divided into two opposing views. Some thought that contemporary women are free to choose and gender is not an influencing factor in relation to leisure. These women believed that leisure is becoming more androgynous and traditional assumptions about gendered roles, as far as leisure is concerned, have become more blurred. The women that held the contrasting attitudes believed that leisure is gendered: meaning women are still very much disadvantaged because of household responsibilities, unlike most men. Women's perception of the differences in quality and quantity of leisure appeared to spring from their own assumptions about traditional, heteronormative relations. These hegemonic assumptions of femininity and masculinity appeared mostly within sports and sport activities. For instance, certain women expressed reluctance to participate in activities they believed to be unfeminine or inappropriate for women and girls because they emulated masculine traits or contradict the hegemonic assumptions of feminine body image. Similarly, a selected few expressed a desire to participate in self-determined leisure, which it may be argued, is a form of individual resistance. Also, new types of hobbies and sport-like activities such as pole dancing and

technology assisted forms of dating were also frowned upon by particular women, because they were considered unsuitable or inappropriate for women.

The argument that some women do utilise forms of leisure as resistance to the restrictive gendered roles and relations that were discussed above comes from the conceptualisations particular women held about leisure that entailed notions of self-determination, self-expression and agency.

b) The meanings of work for Sofian women

The value of leisure for most women appeared to be linked to the level of their satisfaction with their paid work. Findings about the meanings of these Sofian women's work consist of an assortment of both positive and negative factors that influence the importance, value and centrality of paid work in the women's lives. Although these factors vary in relation to the women's individual life circumstances and occupations there are some commonalities in the perceived value, and benefits/outcomes of paid work, such as sense of financial well-being and security, and increase of confidence and self-esteem among others.

c) Perceptions of gender roles and relations

The research findings suggest that women's meanings of work and their subjective perspectives of gender roles and relations are influenced by the dominant socio-cultural discourses of femininity and masculinity. Women's views about motherhood, gender equality, women's emancipation, empowerment and feminism showed some general misconceptions and rejection of feminism as a result of what was referred to by one woman as the 'irony of emancipation'. The next chapter features an analysis and discussion of the interpretative findings.

Chapter 7: Analysis and Discussion of Findings

In the previous chapter, the immediate findings from the research study were presented. This chapter provides an analysis and a discussion of the multiple leisure meanings held by Generation Y, Sofian women vis-à-vis the dominant, and localised gender ideologies/discourses and in relation to the wider post-feminist context. Sections 7.1 and 7.2 summarise the key discoveries and relates them to the historical context and the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Section 7.3 specifies the contribution of the study to the interdisciplinary field of feminist leisure studies. Finally, in section 7.4 the research problem and sub-problems are revisited and the extent to which this study succeeded in addressing them is put forward. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the limitations of this research study.

7.1 Sofian women's multiple leisure meanings and the complexities of post-feminist femininity

The interpreted findings of this feminist case study exhibited in the previous chapter showed links between the ways meanings are constructed and the new social and political landscape, which McRobbie (2000, 2004, 2007, 2008, and 2009) calls the cultural space of post-feminism. She uses the term to refer to the elements of feminism that have been incorporated into political and institutional life that resulted into the abandonment of feminism within Western cultures. The interpretation of the research data show informant's conceptualisations of paid work and leisure, which reflect both conformity and resistance to the dominant assumptions about femininity and masculinity to fit with new or emerging (neo-liberalised) social and economic arrangements of post-transitional Bulgaria. The findings illustrate multiple leisure and work meanings, which converge around the figure of the girl or young women which weight towards capacity, success, attainment, enjoyment, entitlement and social mobility – the 'career girl' (McRobbie, 2007, 2009). What seems to underpin these meanings is the assumption that women have now won the battle for equality and freedom and possess the capacity for success in education and the labour market. This is exemplified in

the way meaning is created through a combination and interplay of the following themes: (a) perceived values/entitlement of leisure; (b) perceived benefits/outcomes of leisure; (c) containers/opportunities; (d) negotiated constraints to leisure; (e) leisure as a social restraint/constraining; (f) leisure as resistance; (g) perceived value of paid work; (h) perceived benefits/outcomes of employment; and (i) perceptions of gender roles/relations in everyday settings. Constructs (a)–(e) were used by Henderson (1994) as a baseline for meaning creation and constructs (f)–(i) emerged from the data. All are elaborated on further in this section.

7.1.1 The ‘new sexual contract’ – Generation Y, Sofian women as neo-liberal subjects

The research findings showed that Generation Y, Sofian women’s perceptions about value/entitlement to leisure can widely be understood in the contexts of what McRobbie (2007, 2008, 2009) calls the ‘new sexual contract’ which, is now seemingly available to young women in Bulgaria, after the demise of socialism and the rise of market economy. McRobbie (2008, 2009) uses the term ‘new sexual contact’ to refer to the provision of education, employment and control of fertility to young women, on behalf of the government. In the aftermath of Bulgaria’s political and economic transformations, the incorporation of elements of feminism into institutional life (mostly through processes of modernisation and globalisation) creates a discourse within popular culture, which is seen as a substitute for feminism (i.e. it is faux feminism). Butler (2005) calls it ‘intelligibility’ of gender – young women’s aversion to feminism, rewarded by the promise of freedom and independence, mostly through the wage-earning capacity, which is also a symbolic mark of citizenship, respectability and entitlement (McRobbie, 2009). Consequently, in this post-feminist guise of equality, (as though it is already achieved) young Sofian women are attributed with capacity, through employment. The interpretations of the findings presented in the next section suggest that for the interviewed women employment is imperative for their self-identification as modern neo-liberal subjects.

Similarly to the more 'advanced democracies' of the West, leisure is held in high regard by almost all participants, regardless of their respective life situations and occupations. Even though there are slight variations within the conceptualisations women hold about leisure, a predominant theme is 'time/activity for oneself', freely chosen activity, a means for self-expression that indicate a high degree of importance of leisure for the individual that increase in value in relation to women's roles and type of employment. Most women express a desire for more leisure and the lack of it is seen as a significant problem. Moreover, the value of leisure for the majority of Sofian women is also emphasised by their reluctance to share leisure time with others and certain women's refusal of a salary increase in favour of more leisure. Still, a few women express contentment with their work-leisure relationship and do not feel the need for more leisure, indicating that the value/entitlement to leisure is highly situational and suggest that meanings change throughout the life course and in relation two women's changing roles.

Similarly, the leisure experiences of Generation Y, Sofian women yield numerous benefits/outcomes that varied from intrinsic – excitement or expression embedded in the form or site of the activity, to more social outcomes – focused on developing or expressing relationships and communication. Still, some persistent outcomes of leisure are discovered including: a) rest and relaxation; b) doing nothing; c) enjoyment, pleasure and happiness; d) escape from routine and responsibility; e) healthier way of living and self-love; f) intellectual improvement and knowledge; g) sport and physical activity; and h) stimulus seeking. Unsurprisingly, the constructs of rest and relaxation are the most frequently cited benefits/outcomes, regardless of the women's occupation. Their primary motivation for seeking 'peace and quiet'; 'get enough sleep'; 'do nothing' types of leisure outcomes suggest that home-based leisure aims to fulfil women's basic physiological needs. Many of the participants stress the importance of these benefits for their emotional and physical recuperation and home-based leisure is an essential part of the process of rest and recuperation. The theme of escape from routine and responsibility emerge frequently, as

women crave unobligated time. Some find it difficult to separate work from leisure and claim that this inability prevents them from utilising their leisure the way they want to.

Women who engage in active leisure mention the benefits/outcomes of sports and physical activity. They claim numerous motivations, such as keeping fit through exercising; dealing with workload and/or stress at work through physical activity; feelings of personal strength and control; self-esteem and self-confidence boost; self-actualisation. Some women who practise extreme sports pursue excitement and adventure; others embody their leisure choices/pursuits through their 'more traditional' sport behaviours. Particular women want to work towards further intellectual development and acquire additional knowledge and skills in relevant to them spheres. Some of them try to incorporate their personal interests and leisure within their work in order to enjoy both work and leisure interests. The need for self-expression through creative endeavours is also mentioned in the context of learning, intellectual development and knowledge acquirement. In fact, many of the informants commonly talk about the links between leisure interests, learning, self-expression and creating. The creative impulse is cited often and is accomplished through the multitude of leisure pursuits, such as blogging. Furthermore, some women express desires for healthier lifestyle. Some women saw leisure as a counterreaction against the psychological and physical demands of employment, as often these women neglected their leisure needs because of it. In such case, some women sought benefits that were oriented towards 'inner balance; self-love and positive thinking'. The related emphasis on self-knowledge, self-care and consequently self-love appeared to be the main outcomes of the chosen leisure – seen as tools to accomplish the desired benefit.

All of these findings suggest that Generation Y, Sofian women seek benefits that fit the neoliberal discourses of subjectivity, i.e. responsabilisation, self-discipline, self-worth, and 'proper' work and leisure (Harris, 2004b). Firstly, within this wider context, it is possible to suggest that Generation Y, Sofian women's leisure fall in line with the image of the young

women in Western capitalist societies, i.e. the 'Future Girls' and 'Top Girls' who have been 'constructed' as the vanguard of the new subjectivity (Harris, 2004b: 1). Similar to their Western counterparts, the privileged, middle class, Sofian girl/subject is constructed as a powerful actor within the free market that possesses freedoms to choose their leisure. Furthermore, she embodies a distinctively neoliberal subjectivity that strives for self-fulfilment, and demonstrates conduct of the self through monitoring, surveillance and self-investment (Harris, 2004a, 2004b). Secondly, the predominantly self-cantered, self-focused benefits that millennial, Sofian women seek appear to be linked to the increasing aegis of the neoliberal individualism and a reaction to it. Within the language of the new Bulgarian government, the women who have benefited from the equal opportunities, which now, more than ever, are available to them, can be considered as the embodiment of the values of the new Bulgarian meritocracy. Thus, women's success and economic prosperity are based on their enthusiasm for work and having a career, which is expressed by most participants. The capacity for employment appears to be a feature of contemporary young womanhood, summed up, by Anita Harris as the 'can do' girl (Harris 2004b). The stress Sofian women put on intrinsic benefits of leisure speaks to this capacity, however, it also underlines the increased demands of their role as economically active citizens and reveal the everyday tactics they employ to negotiate their leisure freedoms within specified social conditions and political constraints.

In this research study, the containers/opportunities in which Sofian women 'fit' leisure are the local, social settings and some types of activities. They contribute to the broader understanding of the multiple meanings of leisure for individual women as they represent the contextual places that help form women's identity. For example, in the Sofian context 'going out' types of leisure activities have different meanings and forms for individual women. A common conception, however, is its association with socialising in bars and clubs and alcohol consumption, which is a predominant leisure practice and have both positive and negative aspects for them. Most women associate 'going out' with socialising, friendship and

the 'Friday night culture', which some women reject and others embrace, depending on their particular life circumstances.

The varieties of containers/opportunities are the leisure spaces women negotiate within the context of urban leisure. They appear grounded in neoliberal frameworks of individualisation, capitalist consumer markets and the gendered production of neoliberal consumer-citizenship that developed in the decades after the fall of socialism. For instance, many of the interviewed Sofian women's perceptions of freedom and independence (e.g. they participate in leisure in a seemingly autonomous manner) revolve around these new 'freedoms and opportunities'. Their perceptions of freedom, independence and the capacity for success apply to leisure choice as well. What is problematic, though, is that the hallmark of a have-it-all femininity that is equally available to all is a fictional storyline: it is representative of the few, not the many - in this case the professional stratum of middle-class, Millennial Sofian women. What is more, the nature of free choice is increasingly becoming associated with opportunities for consumptive practices and the the privatisation of leisure and sports in post-socialism. This point is further discussed in the next chapter.

7.1.2 Negotiated constraints and leisure as resistance

As examined in the beginning of the thesis, gender issues are far from being thoroughly integrated into political and everyday life. However, in the aftermath of Bulgaria's accession to the EU, the implementation of gender equality policies began affecting the public sphere mainly through tackling inequality in employment. The 'choice' and 'empowerment' rhetoric, which have come to saturate popular cultural discourse over the past few decades, presuppose and demand a particular relationship to the labour market (intense economic activity) and the state (non-reliance on welfare) that permit young Sofian women to emerge as subjects of capacity. Regardless of this capacity, women face more or less the same temporal, economic and gendered constraints, as previous generations. For example, findings show that almost all women commit more than 40 hours per week to paid

employment, with some stating up to 60 hours per week. What is more, almost all the women, regardless of their occupation, report working unpaid overtime. This dedication alone is seen as constraining leisure as some of the women neglect their leisure need in favour of work. Consequently, most interviewees report time poverty as a main constraint to leisure in contrast with only one participant who point out economic constraints as barriers to participation. The findings about the individual constraints women face are also inexplicably linked to the new sexual contract and the ways they try to negotiate their perceptions of contemporary femininity. Their multiple roles as workers, consumer and wives/mothers appear to affect these women disproportionately. Still, many women engage in various types of urban leisure pursuits (i.e., attend sport, music and cultural events, go to the cinema and the theater; enjoy the city's gardens and parks) and some believe that due to an increase of sport facilities in Sofia, there are more opportunities for leisure than ever before. In other words, as women put more effort and energy into developing a career (i.e. exercise their capacity) their efforts are countered by the consumer culture and the new forms of traditionalism (i.e the reoccurrence of the nuclear family model with a male breadwinner and a mother/wife, which is now attributed with choice and self-control of production and reproduction). This point is further elaborated in the next section.

a) Leisure as a social restraint/constraining

In this study, the idea of leisure as constraining (i.e., leisure as social restraint) is associated with women's perceptions about the leisure gap and the traditional, heteronormative gender discourses primarily within the sport contexts. Some women believe that in recent years, leisure has become more androgynous and women are not disadvantaged when it comes to choice or participation. Within the context of sports, women voice different views and understandings of body image and gender-appropriate leisure, some of which are lined to the hegemonic gender discourses of certain sports as a heterosexual, male-dominated domain. Leisure is also seen as constraining because some women conveyed their reluctance to engage in unorthodox leisure activities such as pole dancing or

online/technology assisted dating because of fear of social stigmatization. Sofian womne's constructions of leisure as social restraint illuminate the ambivalence and complexity that marks relationships to normative and non-normative configurations of femininity and masculinity.

b) Leisure as resistance

Similarly, to previous findings about menaings of leisure, the findings in support of the idea of leisure as resistance are based on the belief that leisure is a matter of personal choice that is made within the contexts of relative freedoms and the new sexual contact. It is argued here that some women's leisure include notions of self-expression and self-determination. What is more, individual women, regardless of their social situation and occupation, place high value on their leisure and seek benefits/outcomes that serve them in the best possible way. The instances of exertion of personal will and choice come from women's emphasis on 'the self' aspect. Women empower themselves through leisure by putting themselves first and choosing leisure that would: boost their self-esteem; help them develop additional skills; cultivate feelings of self-love and self-care; allow them to express themselves; or express their sexuality. Furthermore, the self-determined aspect of leisure as resistance is supported by some women's claims about staying true to themselves and realising that 'work in not everything'.

7.1.3 Perceived value of paid work

Neo-liberal narratives of female success in 21st century Bulgaria suggest that the inevitability of classed and gendered trajectories have been undone in the context of wider social change. Women, it is suggested, are no longer directed into the traditional pathways of domesticity and motherhood but rather, into full and active labour market participation. Thus, while 30 years ago the home was conceived as the primary destination for women, particularly those from lower socio-economic backgrounds (McRobbie 1992), there has been an important shift in the hierarchy between the home and workplace within young women's

future biographies. The research findings suggest that unlike the previous generation, Generation Y, Sofian women seem to expect a life of paid work, mostly, in the form of a career that is personally fulfilling. Within the conditions of the post-feminist sexual contract and the efforts of the new national government towards increasing privatisation and corporatisation of public life, women's working identity mark out a new horizon of recognisable agency and visibility, as well as a transcendence of class hierarchies. The Millennial generation of middle-class, Sofian women seem hyper-actively positioned in relation to a wide range of social, political and economic changes of which they themselves appear to be the privileged subjects unlike previous generations, whose emancipation was considered as part of the class struggle. The perceived value of work for these women correlate with the ways in which education and employment play a key role in this redesignation of young women in a wider, neoliberal context. In this context, the attribution of capacity contributes, I argue, to the re-making of social privilege of the middle-class femininity and the new category of Bulgarian womanhood.

The levels of work satisfaction for most interviewees depend on various aspects of their occupation and contribute to both the lower and higher levels of well-being and lifestyle satisfaction. The interconnected nature of work and leisure for the interviewed women was evident from the ways in which these reported aspects (individually or collectively) affected women's perceptions of the value of paid work in their lives, which in turn appeared to influence their leisure in a positive or negative way. The value, centrality and entitlement to work suggest that Millennial Sofian women are a generation that appear to be 'gender aware', because of equal opportunity policies in the educational and employment spheres. A related theme of perceived benefits/outcomes of paid work also contributed to the understanding of this relationship.

A widely cited benefit/outcome of paid employment among the interviewees was economic well-being. Certain women claimed that they are content with their salaries 'in comparison to

other people's salaries and the economic situation in Bulgaria' and others claimed that they spend most of their salaries on leisure. Furthermore, many women spoke about the benefits of increased confidence and self-esteem that they felt due to their employment. Other benefits include flexible work hours, good rapport with colleagues, and networking.

7.1.4 Perceptions of gender roles/relations

Individual women voice multiple cultural perceptions of normative discourses of femininity and masculinity as they were asked about gender relations in everyday life. For example, one woman speaks of behaving in a more masculine way at work in order to conform to the normative gender discourse. Some women embrace the traditional assumptions of motherhood and the family; others oppose the prioritisation of women's biological function as a main role. Certain women express contradictory statements about marriage and motherhood. Others speak about the 'irony of emancipation', which according to some interviewees did not facilitate change; on the contrary, it led to 'the pseudo-machismo of the Bulgarian man'. In other words, some women reject feminism, as they considered it a threat to normal gender relations and its inherent agenda aims to deprive men of their traditional roles and social functions as breadwinners and providers.

These findings can be understood as the post-feminist perceptions of the contemporary gender culture, that manifest within popular discourse, in the form of what McRobbie (2007), (drawing from Riviere 1929/1986 and Butler 1999: 65), calls the post-feminist sexual contract. It is defined, as the self-conscious means by which young women are encouraged to collude with the re-stabilisation of gender norms to undo the gains of feminism and dissociate themselves from this now discredited political identity. In fact, the undoing of feminism, is visible in millennial Sofian women's rejection of feminism and their understanding of the normative gender culture.

7.2 Relationship to Background Research and Feminist Leisure Research

This part of the thesis considers the relevant literature on women's leisure in order to contextualise the analysis of the specific cultural meanings of leisure and work for the participants. The discussion makes references to the feminist literature reviewed in Chapter 2 in order to understand the relevance of the findings to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks used in this investigation.

7.2.1 The meanings of leisure for Generation Y, Sofian women

The research findings show that Sofian women's meanings of leisure are comprised of and dependent on a number of interacting and cumulative factors that also determine individual women's life satisfaction and quality of life during the different stages of the life course. Women's leisure meanings are influenced by a gender culture reproduced by normative cultural and post-feminist discourses. The interpretive findings support the argument for the emergence of 'multiple meanings' of leisure and the importance of grounding research in feminist frameworks (Henderson *et al.*, 2002). It should be noted that this study's findings fall in line with the 'gendered meanings of leisure' framework proposed by Henderson (1994) but also include the aspect of resistance to the framework of analysis, suggesting that these frameworks are not mutually exclusive.

The research case study draws on the work of second wave leisure feminists such as Deem (1986); Green *et al.* (1990), Henderson and Allen (1991), Henderson and Bialeschki (1991, 1994) and Miller and Brown's (2005) theorising about women's leisure. The findings built on the concept of 'ethic of care' (Gilligan, 1982) i.e., the gendered set of assumptions and beliefs and the degree to which women conform to them (Henderson and Allen, 1991; Tirone and Shaw, 1997; Koca *et al.*, 2009). Drawing from Gilligan's (1982) theorising, Henderson and Allen (1991) argued that women are influenced by the 'ethic of care', which precludes them to attend to the needs of others first, disregarding their own needs, out of internalised

fear of being selfish. The concept of entitlement is also associated with the ideology of familism, which advocates traditional patriarchal gender roles division (Shaw, 1999).

The understanding of leisure meanings is explored further through the perceived leisure benefits/outcomes that women sought. Leisure is associated with a number of physical, emotional and social benefits, including improving health, revealing stress, nurturing personal interests and increased sense of belonging to a community (Driver *et al.*, 1991; Henderson *et al.*, 1996); still little is known about the role of gender and the reasons for involvement, motivations and satisfactions (Henderson, 1994). Feminist researchers like Deem (1986), Green *et al.* (1990) and Henderson *et al.* (1989) argue that women's lives can be made visible through leisure involvement and related motivations. Some outcomes/benefits sought by individual Sofian women, although highly situational fall in line with the argument of resistance and personal empowerment through leisure. This study's interpretive findings suggest that similarly to value/entitlement to leisure, certain women's inherent motivation comes from a wish to exert personal power through self-determined leisure, atypical leisure engagement/ or leisure behavior that challenges gender roles.

The research findings about 'containers' and leisure opportunities are relevant to broadening the understanding of women's leisure meanings, as 'meaning is often dependent upon having structured opportunities for leisure and recreation' (Henderson, 1994:5). Research carried out on women's leisure opportunities primarily focused on availability of leisure services for women (Henderson, 1994). Findings about Generation Y, Sofian women's containers/opportunities indicated that 'containers' vary for individual women and in relation to their life situation, age and occupation. Nevertheless, women still shared some commonalities in terms of opportunities for leisure, within the contemporary urban environment. The findings suggest that some women embrace the activities of 'going out', as there are a lot of opportunities for this type of leisure in the city, and felt relatively free to choose for themselves. What is more, the different meanings of 'going out' appeared similar

to studies about women, drinking and socialising in bars and clubs that have traditionally been regarded as a masculine leisure activity (Whitehead, 1976; Hey, 1986; Green *et al.*, 1987). Studies in the UK showed a decline in the social taboos surrounding women and drinking (Day *et al.*, 2004) and registered an expansion of the night-time industries (Winlow and Hall, 2006). Brooks (2008:346) argues that:

the centrality of socialising in bars, pubs, and clubs within young women's lives is a prime example of the way in which young women are subverting conventional cultural discourses around appropriate feminine behaviour.

Brooks (2008) found that although UK women enjoyed their social freedoms and generally exhibited 'women can now do anything' attitudes in relation to drinking and leisure. They claimed to be aware of the gendered risk associated with this type of leisure for women and alcohol consumption including the negative perceptions of being 'unfeminine, unattractive or of questionable sexual character' (Brooks, 2008:346). In contrast, the negative aspects named by Sofian women in relation to bars and clubs, in particular, included excessive alcohol consumption as a widely practised leisure pursuit and the related health-related risks for the consumer. A consensus appeared to exist among Sofian women that 'going out' is associated with alcohol consumption, socialising in bars and clubs that is widely socially acceptable for both sexes. Moreover, women were more likely to reject this type of leisure pursuit because they have reached saturation point rather than because they felt constrained by normative gendered discourses of femininity or stereotypical gendered assumptions. In fact, some women rejected the idea of 'living for the weekend' and the 'Friday night culture', which some women claimed is 'what we do'. In the Sofian case, it can be argued that the meaning of 'going out' for individual women is dependent on interpersonal and objective constraints rather than gendered discourses of femininity or gender stereotyping.

The meanings of leisure also include women's internalisation of gendered discourses of femininity in relation to sport and physical activity. These findings relate to the previously

examined argument that women's perceptions of the post-feminist sexual contact (McRobbie, 2007). Moreover, the interpretive results suggest that some participants have internalised restrictive gendered roles that, in some cases, either prevent them from engaging in new types of leisure or persuade them to secretly engage in them for fear of social judgement. Similar to studies that focused on the gendered nature of leisure constraints and ideologies (Henderson, 1991; Shaw, 1994), many participants expressed traditional assumptions about gender and sports, and in particular expressed traditional attitudes towards 'gender-appropriate' leisure. Thus, some women identified particular leisure activities as socially restraining or as inhibiting women's participation in leisure. The idea of leisure as constraining falls within the cultural feminist perspective, advocated by Alcoff (1988) and (Henderson 1991). Particular findings within this study fall in line with traditional notions of appropriate gender roles and assumptions about femininity and masculinity and thus, reduce the choices and restricts the opportunities for Sofian women to engage in non-traditional leisure pursuits.

So far, the various 'objective' and 'subjective/gendered' constraints upon Sofian women were presented to help understand the meanings of leisure for them. The notion of leisure as resistance contributes to this analysis, too. In the present study, women's leisure behaviour is interpreted as act of individual resistance to 'oppressive' gender discourse/ideologies with the broader society. In particular, women's personal empowerment, through the exercise of agency within the conditions of 'relative freedom', (Wearing ,1990) and their entitlement to it suggest that some Sofian women do attempt to resist the 'oppressive' gendered roles by exercising themselves through their leisure. These findings corresponded with studies that discovered women's resistance to gendered restrictions through leisure (Freysinger and Flannery, 1992). For instance, Wearing's (1992) research on Australian mothers showed how personal leisure choice is used as resisting hegemonic restrictive assumptions about motherhood. Shaw (1985, 1992) also pointed out the importance of women's autonomy and independence through leisure. Leisure was empowering to women through activities such as

rugby (Murry and Howat, 2009) and climbing (Dilley and Scraton, 2010). More recently, research on the 'political nature' of women's leisure (Parry, 2003; Henderson and Gibson, 2013) also put the focus on the changing nature of gendered leisure and women's increasing 'owning' of their leisure. The findings from this study suggest that even though, as reviewed in Chapter 2, no clear conceptualisation of resistance exists because research on women's resistance comes from variety of theoretical perspectives (Shaw, 2001), views on resistance do contain commonalities and are not necessarily opposing (Shaw, 2001). Thus, it can be suggested that although there are 'objective' and 'subjective/gendered' constraints on Sofian women leisure, its meanings include an aspect of resistance to the traditional notions of appropriate gender roles and assumptions about femininity and masculinity.

Finally, the age, gender, sexuality intersectional power relations are important to acknowledge in relation to leisure and work meanings. For example, as argued in Chapter 1, the combination of age factors and experience of socialist regimes makes it more difficult for women from the socialist cohort to adapt to the new regime. In comparison, findings from this research demonstrated that women who belong to the Generation Y cohort see their employment as their mission, as a part of their (collective) identity and as their contribution to society. At the same, time these women, who do not have the 'heritage' from the socialist period have demonstrated more flexible approach and more pro-active attitudes at the labour market. Their employment is part of their process of individualisation, as means of acquiring the lifestyle they want. Nevertheless, the interpretation of women's perceptions about gender roles and femininity reveal the influence of the post-feminist context and the new sexual contract in particular, which reinforce patriarchal power. I argue that Generation Y, Sofian women's femininity does not necessarily fit into a simple polarity, that is either 'traditional' (women as wives/mothers and labourers) or 'modern' (assimilating to 'Western' values and lifestyles). Their identities relate to both their 'Bulgarianess' and 'Westernness' and are becoming increasingly hybrid and fluid. It should be noted that this study focuses only on heterosexual, middle class, women in their 20s /30s and further investigation is

needed to contextualise the dynamics of power relations affecting other, more disadvantaged groups.

7.2.2 The meanings of work for Sofian women in full-time employment

Perceptions about the centrality, significance and value of paid work were associated with overall life satisfaction, the women's type of occupation and time spent at work. Moreover, as time is an essential part of any worker's life, a sustainable body of literature exists on the growth of time poverty in workers' lives (Warren, 2003). For instance, in her research on the dual-earner family Hochschild (1997) reported on the 'second shift' of domestic work that women face in addition to their paid work. Other studies situated within the 'time famine' debates across European countries pointed out emerging 'time poverty' as a major social problem (Gershuny, 2000). Still, the majority of research on gender and the division of domestic labour is mostly centred within Western countries, and explores division of domestic labour among 'dual-career' couples as a family type or dual-earner families (Skinner, 1980). The findings presented and discussed in this research study generally correlate with the existing literature that focuses on the interrelationship between domestic labour, gender and the constraining role of full-time employment legitimised by the normalisation of the unpaid overtime. In particular, the findings support previous research findings on the fragmented nature of women's leisure (Deem, 1982; Shaw, 1985); the view that female gender is generally disadvantaged in leisure (Henderson *et.al.*, 1988; Henderson and Allen, 1991; Henderson and Bialeschki, 1991; Wearing and Wearing, 1988); and the role conflict related to women's gendered position in society (Hillbrecht, 2007). Moreover, the meanings of work for these Sofian women are closely related to the meanings of leisure as both have positive and negative benefits/outcomes for individual women depending on their occupation and satisfaction with employment. In fact, it is difficult to say which aspect is the primary one in these Sofian women's lives because of the varied nature of the work–leisure relationship. Still, most interviewees pointed out 'time poverty' (Hochschild, 1997; Warren, 2003) as a major constraint based on gendered domestic responsibilities, which they

consider part of their leisure time, and some women believed that contemporary Sofian women have more opportunities for leisure (especially for casual sport participation and access to leisure facilities) than the previous generation. These findings present a difficulty in locating the meanings of leisure within a grand narrative or work–leisure theoretical framework because to date there has been a lack of representation in the work–leisure literature of women’s experience (Hilbrecht, 2007). In addition, the study findings contribute to understanding of young, single and never married women in changing perceptions of motherhood, the family and gender roles and relations.

7.3 Contribution to Knowledge

The contribution of this feminist research case study to knowledge can be seen as having three main aspects/themes. Firstly, it contributes to the better understanding of the ‘meanings’ of leisure for women and the increasing complexity and problematics of this type of analysis. Secondly, it adds to the contemporary feminist epistemology and methodological debates. Thirdly, it stresses the importance of the feminist frameworks to gender-based research (Henderson and Gibson, 2013). These areas of knowledge contribution are examined further in this section.

a) Contribution to the understanding of the ‘meanings’ of women’s leisure from a non-Western perspective

This thesis contributes to the broader scholarship of feminist leisure studies. It addresses the gap in literature about the complexities and problematic of gender and leisure from a non-Western cultural perspective. This study answers calls from feminist leisure scholars to investigate meanings of leisure for non-Western women (Henderson and Gibson, 2013). The interpretive findings along with the autoethnographic narrative suggest that meanings of leisure for Generation Y, Sofian women are constructed through a interplay of elements such as: women’s perceptions of value of leisure and their entitlement to it; the perceived benefits/outcomes of leisure; the opportunities and ‘containers’ available; the ‘objective’ and ‘subjective/gendered’ constraints to leisure; the value/centrality of paid work and the

benefits/outcomes of employment. The study also found women's traditional, cultural perceptions of femininity, masculinity, the family, and gendered roles and relations to be contradictory, as many interviewees appeared to be both constrained by hegemonic, gendered assumptions but still manage to exercise their agenic power, believe in their own entitlement to leisure and increasingly focus on self-care, self-improvement and 'self-love' through leisure. Thus, the study builds on the work of other feminist leisure authors who have generally focused on empowering women to experience leisure (Green *et al.*, 1988; Shaw, 1985; Bialeschki and Henderson, 1986); authors who have addressed the multiple meanings of leisure, i.e., the broader body of research carried out in the 1990, examined in Chapter 2 Literature review; and gendered expectations (Deem, 1982, 1992).

What is more, this research inquiry contributes to the understanding of the significance of the complex local and global influences that reshaped Bulgarian society after socialism, to the meanings of leisure. No previous studies are available within leisure studies on Bulgarian women's leisure problematics. This contribution to knowledge emphasises the uniqueness of this exploratory case study, as no previous research exists that specifically focuses on situated leisure and work meanings of Generation Y, Sofian women. Within the Bulgarian feminist scholarship some authors have stressed the importance of addressing issues of historical transformations and women's positions and role in society (Todorova, 1994), and others have documented the Bulgarian women's movement (Ivancheva, 2014); still, no research exists on the meanings of women's leisure in a historically patriarchal society, that has gone through significant social and political changes. Therefore, the interpretive findings, although not generalisable, provide an insight into the complexity of factors that comprise individual meanings but also shine light on the localised discourses/ideologies that influence meaning. In this way, this study challenges the ethnocentricity of leisure and addresses the need for criticality in leisure research (Iwasaki *et al.*, 2007; Roberts, 2010; Henderson and Gibson, 2013).

b) Epistemological and methodological contribution to feminist research

This study utilises a feminist epistemology that falls within the on-going debate about feminist philosophy of science. This study uses a feminist epistemological framework that: a) favours women's everyday experience as a 'point of entry' into knowledge (Smith, 1987, 1989, 1990a, 1990b; Hundleby, 2011); and at the same time, b) emphasises the importance of the individual, localised, contextual knowledge(s) (Longino, 1989, 1990) to understanding the meanings of leisure under structured power relations/ideologies/discourses (Harding, 1986, 1991); and c) includes an self-reflexive, autoethnographic approach to address the on-going debate of how social locations shape the researcher's beliefs, subjectivity and epistemic agency (Intemann, 2010). Thus, this research study contributes to contemporary debates about feminist science and ways to 'do science as a feminist' (Code, 2008), and the role of the individual in creation of knowledge (Sobstyl, 2004). The self-reflexive and the autoethnographic approach adopted by the investigator during the study emphasises the individualistic epistemology accepted by her as an epistemic stance. The self-reflexive practice in this case study is critical for comprehending the complexities of the researcher's personal identification and her relationship with the participants. Moreover, it poses a parallel between feminist theorising about epistemology and the related methodology for conduct of real-world research by describing the dilemmas and difficulties the researcher had to overcome during the process of investigation. Finally, in accordance with the idea of giving women 'voice' (Henderson *et al.*, 1996), this study argues that women's leisure and work meanings can be best captured by qualitative and self-reflexive methods.

c) Contribution to research that specifically advocated the use of various feminist frameworks to leisure research

The findings of this feminist leisure case study contribute to the assertion of the need to understand 'situated meaning' and the role of structural and ideological constraints that create and influence meaning (Coalter, 1997). This falls in line with the use of critical theory in the analysis of the political nature of women's leisure (Henderson and Hickerson, 2007).

This study also contributes to the growing research on the women and constraints (Henderson and Shaw, 2006), as emerging ways of thinking about women and leisure in the context of post-structuralism now point attention to the idea of multiple identities, the reflexive self and rejection of 'one size fits all' approaches to explanation. As this study focused on determining individual meanings of women's leisure and work, it contributes to the continuing debate about leisure, constraints and resistance theorising (Shaw, 1994) by incorporating a framework of leisure meanings that recognises the complex and contradictory nature of women's leisure. The incorporation of the three approaches: constraints to leisure; leisure as constraining and leisure as resistance into the broader framework of meanings of leisure for Sofian women in full-time employment, allows an insight into the diversity of women's experiences and the emphasis on the contradictions inherent in individual women's lives that should be taken into account in further research.

7.4 Research Study Problem and Sub-problem Revisited

The aim of this exploratory case study was to broaden the understanding of the multiple meanings Sofian women attach to their leisure and work and propose areas for further investigation of the related issues and problematics. The main study problem and related sub-problems were presented in the introductory chapter of this thesis. In this section, the researcher re-visits the sub-problems and critically evaluates the degree to which they have been addressed and the main study problem resolved.

a) Sub-problem 1: To explore Sofian women's conceptualisations of leisure in order to capture the key characteristics of leisure meanings for them.

The researcher considers the first sub-problem addressed and its aim largely fulfilled. Individual Sofian women hold various conceptualisations of leisure that appear to be influenced by and consistent with the traditional, patriarchal socio-cultural discourses about gender, women's roles and feminism and 'can do' career and lifestyle choices rooted in post-feminist context and neoliberal discourses and values. In addition, individual meanings are created based on a multitude of intersecting 'objective' and 'gendered' constraints and local

containers/opportunities for leisure. Some individual meanings are consistent with the notion of leisure as resistance and personal empowerment as the majority of these women express entitlement to it, along with greater concern for their own well-being and considered leisure as a way to cater to their leisure needs, which in turn falls in line with the new sexual contract. The individual conceptualisations of leisure include various aspects. Most participants define it mainly as the absence of paid work. For others, the boundaries between work and leisure are blurred. Mostly importantly, whatever definition is used, the aspect of self-determined leisure and entitlement to leisure are common theme that emerge. It can be concluded that although there is no consensus on a unified definition of leisure, its value and inherent meaning suggest that leisure is a central life pursuit for many of the interviewed full-time employed Sofian women, regardless of their occupation or life situation.

b) Sub-problem 2: To investigate Sofian women's conceptualisation of work in order to capture the juxtaposition of work and leisure for them.

The aim of the second sub-problem is accomplished, as well. The research findings show the value and centrality of paid work and factors influencing overall job satisfaction for individual women. Moreover, women's perceptions of the value and centrality of paid work are dependent on interplay of multiple factors (similarly to perceptions of leisure) which appear to affect the overall work–leisure relationship in either a positive or a negative way. Thus, even though many women are satisfied with their employment, they also recognise the enabling and the constraining roles of paid work, in relation to the increasing 'normalisation of unpaid overtime'. The study found that the features of paid work that contributed to the overall work satisfaction facilitate leisure experiences or opportunities as well. For example, some participants' jobs provided opportunities for professional development and increase the individual's sense of accomplishment and self-worth, which affect not only their overall work satisfaction, but their leisure motivations and choice of leisure too. In conclusion, millennial Sofian women appear to be the first generation positioned in relation to a wide range of social, political and economic changes of which they themselves appear to be the

privileged subjects thanks to the new sexual contract. It can be argued that this generation of young, professional Sofian women have acquired 'new' power based on their economic capacity and mostly perceive themselves free to choose work and leisure freely. However, the cohort of participants constitute primarily of middle-class women, from economically prosperous families that help make these trajectories possible. Their perceptions of employment appear to be radically different from previous generations, with respect to the level of success that one can archived and the expansion of work opportunities one can pursue. Still, many of these women, some in professional and high-paying jobs, report experiencing the effects of gender imbalance of the female-unfriendly post-transitional work culture.

c) Sub-problem 3: To uncover individual perceptions of gendered discourses/ideologies in relation to work and leisure

The final sub-problem reveal the lived experiences of Generation Y, Sofian women 'within the network of political, economic and social linkages that produce and give meaning' to them and involves a movement between wider culture and the individual or local (Silk, 2007: 254). Findings show perceptions of gendered relations based on the notion of women as 'caretakers' and the prioritisation of women's biological function. Some participants generally believe in the concept of gender equality and considere themselves as having equal political and social rights; however, these beliefs appear to be contrary to their own perception about the role and position of women in society. The participants express contradictory views about the idealized and romanticized images of the concepts of marriage and motherhood and the 'real-world' examples participants claim to have observed. Individual perceptions about gender equality, women's roles and empowerment led some participants to believe in 'the irony of emancipation', that did nothing for women except promote additional roles and responsibilities in everyday life. Finally, some women's rejection of feminism stream from the belief that it represented an ideology that encourage women's domination over men and deprived men of their 'natural' roles as providers.

d) Study Problem: Understanding the leisure and work meanings of full-time employed women in Sofia, in relation to the dominant gender ideologies and discourses, which occur across the broader Bulgarian society

In this exploratory feminist case study, the study problem has been attended to to a great extent following the successive fulfilment of its constituent sub-problems (a-c) examined above. The consequent analysis and discussion of the interpretive findings presented a broader understanding of the complexity of Generation Y, Sofian women's leisure meanings that arguably cannot be investigated separately from work and the socio-cultural discourses/ideology. In addition, the gendered perspective of this inquiry suggests that the multiple leisure and work meanings held by the investigated Sofian women are created through a combination and interplay of inter and intra personal factors and are still regulated and influenced by archaic, discriminatory discourse and ideologies of femininity and masculinity. Consequently, particular women's leisure practices/choices may be considered as individual acts of resistance to these normative discourses.

e) Personal reflections in relation to the study problem and sub-problems

In conclusion, this research study I broaden the understanding of the multiple meanings of leisure and work for millennial, Sofian women and highlight the complexities of their femininity in order to give voice to the participants and potentially facilitate leisure policy creation and management. Many researchers who undertake studies about their own identities, lifestyles and cultures, are often charged with the criticism that their own cultural heritage biases their work. As I have come to realise, the same claim can be made about my research because of my hybrid identity. Sharing a Bulgarian/Sofian identity with the research participant does not necessarily mean that my life is similar to those of the research participants, which made it difficult at times to acknowledge the differences as well as the similarities between the researcher and the research participants and the importance of friendship relationship. Thus, I came to question my own ambiguous position and began to realise some of the intersectional power relations (gender-class-sexuality-ethnicity-ability)

that contextualise my own leisure practice and experience. As this study utilises an emergent methodological framework it is only at the final stages of this investigation that I came to interrogate my own positionality within these intersecting structural realities. My privileged position comes primarily from my white, middle-class, heterosexual, able body. My disadvantage in a global context, however, is my 'non-western' othernesses, that only transpire during my life abroad. These power relations affect my interpretation, experiences and choices of research participants and my own self-identifications, but are far from fully addressed in this work, because of the practical and institutional limitations.

Through this research project I examine the ways in which my fellow millennial, Sofian women articulate themselves within discourses of individualism and 'normal' notions of femininity. Predicated upon debates that distinguish between women as a passive recipients of culture and women as an active, autonomous freely choosing, freely consuming citizen, I draw out the ways in which women's leisure practices can shed light on the complex relationship between choice, agency, consumption and subjectivity and paid work. This thesis concludes by highlighting the ways in which wider socio-cultural discourses and ideologies are having an effect on the multiple meanings of leisure in a post-transitional contemporary Bulgaria. I aim to contribute to knowledge that advances and contemporary leisure studies field by holding together the structural and the agenic in often multifaceted and competing ways. Through exploration and theorisation of multiple leisure meanings, I offer readings of the ways in which millennial Sofian women (re)construct their subjectivities and adopt practices that represent both conformity and resistance to dominant power and discursive relations.

7.5 Limitations of the Research Inquiry

There are some limitations to this study. Limitations are generally defined as the potential factors that are beyond the researcher's control (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010). Firstly, there are issues of sampling and generalisation, participant recruitment and size of the sample. In this

qualitative, feminist study, the approach to sampling is not driven by the need to generalise the findings to other countries, but rather to gain highly subjective insights of Sofian women's work and leisure within the social and cultural context in which these occur. That is why, the purposive sampling approach is chosen, and the sampling population is refined gradually as the research design evolved. That is also why the application of the research findings is limited to young, middle-class Sofian women in full-time employment, in particular to the generation born a few years before or just after the 1989 regime change.

In addition, this research study is also limited by the amount of time available for completion. As the data is collected within a relatively short period of time (one year), comparing with a prolonged, longitudinal study, the findings are a snapshot of the specific economic and socio-cultural development of Bulgaria at that period. That is why the historical background is provided to illustrate the origin of the socio-cultural gender discourses that exist within the broader society and to position the investigation within it.

Further, the study focuses on the paid work and leisure meanings of women in full-time employment as they are believed to be most constrained in their efforts to balance work and leisure in contrast with women in part-time employment or unemployed women, who conceivably have more opportunities to do so (Deem, 1986, Henderson *et al.*, 1989). Moreover, this study is limited only to exploring the work and leisure meanings. However, throughout the fieldwork the problematics of some women's personal relationships emerged as a critical aspect of Sofian women's lives. Some women struggled to establish a healthy balance between work, leisure and personal romantic relationships, which was problematic for their general well-being and overall life satisfaction. In addition, the researcher acknowledges that motherhood issues are only partially addressed in this thesis, as there is only one mother included in the sample. This aspect needs further investigation in future research endeavours as the delaying of motherhood appears to be a characteristic of Generation Y Sofian women and the work-leisure relationship. Thus, this aspect of Sofian

women's lives is not examined further in this thesis although it occupies a central part of women's lives.

Finally, only Sofia is chosen as the geographical location of the study. The capital city of Bulgaria is the hometown of the researcher, and it is selected because it is easily accessible and it represents a microcosm of a larger society. Moreover, as there are numerous practical limitations, such as time and limited resources, the city is chosen for the sake of practicality, convenience and reflexivity. Alternatively, a study that included samples from other Bulgarian cities could have provided a broader understanding of women's life circumstances and a more detailed, intimate look into the economic, social and political factors that constrain or disadvantage women. Finally, a comparison between rural and urban leisure practices in Bulgaria will further contribute to this understanding.

7.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents a summary of the key research findings, elaborates on the links between the empirical findings and the existing literature, identifies the specific contributions to knowledge, re-visits the study problem and sub-problems and considers the limitations of the inquiry. The discussion of findings shows the complex interconnectedness between the leisure and work meanings of employed, Generation Y women in Sofia and the dominant gender ideologies and discourses, which occur across the broader Bulgarian society. *Leisure is held in high regard by almost all women, regardless of their respective life situations and occupations.* Leisure meanings are constructed and reproduced through interplay of multiple aspect such as: (a) perceived values/entitlement of leisure; (b) perceived benefits/outcomes of leisure; (c) local containers/opportunities; (d) negotiated constraints to leisure; (e) leisure as a social restraint/constraining; (f) leisure as resistance; (g) perceived value of paid work; (h) perceived benefits/outcomes of employment; and (i) perceptions of gender roles/relations. This framework suggests a theoretically based understanding of individual meaning construction that includes cultural conceptualisation of leisure and

perceptions of gendered discourses in the analysis, that contributes to the understand the situated problematics of women's leisure.

This exploratory feminist case study relates to feminist leisure scholarship that advocates both structuralist and post-structuralist conceptualisations of leisure and contributes to the idea of multiple leisure meanings. It falls in line with leisure researchers who made women's lives visible, identified power imbalances within social structures and cultural spheres, and emphasized dignity and choice for women in all spheres of their lives, including leisure (Wimbush and Talbot, 1988, Henderson, *et al.*, 1989, Henderson *et al.*, 1996). Furthermore, the discussion of the findings emphasize the epistemological and methodological contribution of this case study to feminist leisure research that advocate a highly subjective, authoethnographic approach to researching women's leisure. This approach further reinforce the originality of the present case study, as no previous empirical investigation exists on Bulgarian women's leisure that utilises a feminist methodology which combines both the participant's and researcher's constructions of 'reality' and emphasises the 'validity' of subjective gendered knowledge.

Chapter 8: Conclusions and Directions for Further Research

This final chapter examines the key findings that emerged from the study and proposes an explanation of the interpretations made by the researcher in relation to the overall process of research and the embeddedness of autoethnographic narrative. In addition, the implications of these findings for the interviewees are discussed along with some possible industry and policy applications. Finally, areas for further research are identified.

8.1 Reiteration and Explanation of Key Findings

Findings suggest that Generation Y, Sofian women's leisure meanings are constructed and negotiated within the context of post-feminist sexual contract and patriarchal gender discourses that are highly likely to restrain Sofian women's everyday lives. However, the researcher suspects that some individual women exercise resistance to these socio-cultural constraints, judging from a combination of factors such as the centrality of leisure, its high value and the nature of leisure behaviours in relation to work and family. Even though these acts of resistance do not appear to be intentional, they empower women by challenging the accepted norms of gender power relations. This claim is based on the theoretical notions of women's agency (i.e., women's self-determined leisure choices within the context of relative freedoms), a constituent part of the researcher's epistemological stance (i.e., the personal is still political) and her personal narrative. Additionally, the study uncover that Generation Y, Sofian women emerge as subjects of capacity, within the conditions of the post-feminist sexual contract that mark out a new horizon of recognisable agency and visibility in the public sectors through employment.

Individual positive and negative aspects of paid work and women's individual satisfaction with their employment deepened on the perceived benefits/outcomes of their respective employment. Various positive and negative aspects contributed to the overall satisfaction with paid work. Most notably, the nature of work itself; the relation between women's education and their occupation; the opportunities for development; work as rewarding and

fulfilling not only a means for financial well-being; work inspires self-worth and self-validation were also cited as factors that contributed to the value of and entitlement to paid work. These factors are a representation of the contemporary work culture and the wider neoliberal discourses of the self as 'enterprising, reflexive, autonomous and self-regulating' (Hollingworth and Williams, 2009: 468). Thus, conceptualisations of paid work expressed by the interviewees produce meanings of paid work to deepen the understanding of neoliberal class politics in contemporary Bulgaria.

Finally, a negative image of feminism (as a social movement and philosophical agenda) emerged from women's accounts about their daily routines, work and gender relations. This claim is consistent with Daskalova's (2005) argument that feminism is perceived by most women as a threat to normal heterosexual relationships between men and women and as an impingement on 'traditional Bulgarian values' of love, marriage, and family.' (Daskalova, 2005:2). In this sense, feminism is widely misunderstood, misinterpreted and rejected. Although some participants recognised their disadvantaged positions in view of the leisure gap or practices in everyday life, and others claimed to be pro-equality, mostly negative perceptions of feminism as an agenda that encourages women to dominate, humiliate and belittle men arose. These findings contribute to the broader understanding of how women negotiate the cultural values that underpin the organization of family and work in contemporary, post-socialist, post-transitional Bulgaria.

8.2 Implications arising from the Study

The implications for understanding the multiple meanings of leisure and work in relation to the gendered discourses and ideologies within the broader society are considered in this section.

a) Recognising the influence of gender on leisure and the complexities of post-feminist femininity

As previously stated, the findings showed that various factors influenced perceptions and conceptualisations of leisure and the construction of meanings. Consequently, the research inquiry has implications for the study of what is like to be a woman, in a country that has gone through (and arguably is still going through) economic, political and social transformations. The findings draw attention to the challenges women face in everyday lives, ways they perceive and experience leisure and the ways meanings are created in contemporary, post-socialist Bulgarian society and in the global, post-feminist era. These findings also have an implication for women's individual lives, as the purpose of this study is to inspire women's individual empowerment and awareness of the gendered biases of both the private and the public spheres. Indeed, it is important to note that the findings have implications for the analysis of power and inequalities, as in this study they were approached through the personal meanings of leisure.

b) Expanding the theoretical underpinning of women's leisure

Secondly, the interpretive results have implications for the theoretical underpinning of women's leisure that comes from a mixture of structuralist and post-structuralist perspectives that allows the personal meanings of women's leisure to be uncovered. The findings have implications for feminist leisure research that seek to address problems of gender and leisure, as although these perspectives are different, they are not completely dichotomous. Thus, the understanding of meanings should not be studied from a singular theoretical approach but from multiple contrasting views, as meaning is not static; on the contrary, it continuously changing in relation to economic and social variables. That is why, in terms of generalisation of the empirical interpretive findings (i.e., the extent to which patterns observed in one study are similar to patterns observed in another study in which the conditions are similar) the study findings are limited only to Generation Y, Sofian women in full-time employment. Nevertheless, the framework of 'objective' and 'gendered' elements of

meaning creation might be applied or tested within similar contexts, for example in other Eastern or central European countries where the 'oppressive' ideologies and discourses might be rooted in similar political and socio-cultural historical developments. Most notably, the framework that narrows the bridge between structuralist and post-structuralist approaches within a feminist paradigmatic stance will benefit both the local and global feminist agendas of understanding women's leisure.

c) Practical implications of the autoethnographic method

Finally, there are practical implications for both the researcher and the researched. As the autoethnographic narrative have widely been criticised and challenged by the scientific community (Custer, 2014), there are some personal implications for the researcher's professional future. As the researcher moves out from being a student and into the professional arena, she is confronted with the difficulties of how to apply autoethnography occupationally. The benefits of autoethnographic writing for academic disciplines such as sociology, education, psychology and the arts are still a topic of discussion, because it endorses and celebrates individuality over the need for normative empirical social science (Custer, 2014; Davidson, 2012; Raab, 2013). Regardless of this difficulty, the feminist investigator's own preference for subjective, evocative works has not faded during the research process or concerning her academic career, as she remains a firm believer in the value and power of highly subjective, embedded narratives that proposes a unique way of understanding and knowledge that opposes the institutionalised, objective science.

On the other hand, the implications for the researched are unpredictable, as the researcher has no way of foreseeing women's responses and reactions to her study's findings. Moreover, the investigator's commitment to do research on and for the benefit of fellow women might not turn out as expected by the researcher herself, as she has no control over other people's reactions. Still, because the purpose of this study is to uncover the meanings of leisure and work for women and consequently, inspire critical thinking about gender

inequality and the normative gendered discourses that constrain their leisure, the researcher will present the findings to the interviewees in the form of a summary, as promised at the beginning of the recruitment process. The related implications for individual women are dependent on individual women's understanding of the findings and whether they can relate to the researcher's personal narrative or not.

d) Policy and industry application of findings

Management and operational bodies of the leisure industries can potentially use this case study to facilitate leisure opportunities, services and products for Generation Y, Sofian women, who are now active participants in the capitalist, consumer culture. Given the constantly changing nature of commercial markets, the public and private sector in the areas of events, recreation, sport and tourism, knowledge about generational cohorts may bring competitive advantage to the leisure management that specialises in community, non-profit and government services. By recognising leisure as a 'site of embodiment through which women's identities are shaped by power relations that regulate freedom and possibilities for change' (Parry and Fullagar, 2013:576) leisure management will be better equipped to understand the dynamic relationship between the leisure service consumers and stakeholders and will have better opportunities to increase women's quality of life. Moreover, knowledge about identity differences and similarities and the intersectional gender relations that affect leisure will also serve to create equal opportunity policies for leisure and recreation.

In Bulgaria, an issue with critical implications for the strategic orientation of leisure, sport and tourism is the transition from totalitarian to democratic models of sport and tourism and the role of the state and other agencies in channelling this process (Girginov, 2001). In other The breakdown of the totalitarian system (i.e. sport and tourism's dependency on the party/state vision) resulted in a multidimensional crises of policy making and executive bodies that went from clearly defined area of state policy to 'no man's land' (Girginov, 2001)

with no clear ruling or operational agenda. The abrupt withdrawal of the state and its agencies from providing sport services led to profound restructuring of structure, actors and relations. At present, the institutional bodies, responsible for strategic policies and development of sport and tourism - The Ministry of Youth and Sport and The Ministry of Tourism, are severely underfunded. The main priority of The Ministry of Youth and Sport is currently the implementation of national strategy for physical activity engagement, healthy way of life and prevention of the negative social processes for the country's youth. Thus, because of financial and political reasons the limited scope of the ministry's efforts only apply to the young population, as other social group's leisure and recreation is increasingly positioned within the private sector in the forms of sport clubs and associations, that are entirely self-funded. There are a number of implications for leisure managements that come from these structural constraints, including women's health and wellbeing. Moreover, the current study of Generation Y, Sofian women might have implications in relation to the understanding of key concepts such as leisure, play, sport, recreation, tourism and events in order to adopt more sophisticated planning, organizing, leading, financing and measuring outcomes of leisure services.

Finally, the study provides insights about the contemporary social problems of the neo-liberal, post-feminist moment, in which women's leisure is positioned. However, there is still a need to provide more insights about community leisure programmes, services and facilities to assist in service provision not only for children but for other groups as well. Additionally, both public and private sector actors and/or leisure opportunity provider may benefit from an intersectional approach to leisure, as this study does not provide an in-depth analysis of the intersectional relations that determine leisure and sport.

8.3 Suggestions for Further Research

This study recognises some directions for further investigation of leisure and work meanings of Bulgarian women. Firstly, the leisure meanings should be further addressed by

investigating women's personal relationships and their contribution to leisure meanings. Secondly, as the study suggests that women's leisure is both constrained and constraining and some individual resistance arguably exists through leisure, questions arise about women's awareness of these 'oppressive' forces and their internalisations of them. Thirdly, the reasons for women's rejection of feminism should be further investigated. Such information might shine light on silent issues of women's private and public identities and lives. Finally, fieldwork carried out in other Bulgarian cities might also be relevant to a wider, more in-depth understanding of the differences and similarity among women's leisure meanings and related issues. All directions for further research are discussed in detail below.

a) Women's personal relationships and leisure meanings

The topic of women's personal and romantic relationships in relation to leisure aroused from the researcher's fieldwork and her own personal experience. Some interviewees' accounts of leisure included their partners in a variety of ways. For instance, some women talked about leisure pursuits that included their partners, but no indication was made whether or not this relation is a constraining one or an empowering one. Research on women in heterosexual romantic relationships found that although couples' leisure does satisfy women's leisure needs, this type of joint leisure can also be constraining to women, as they were more likely to accommodate their partners' needs rather than their own (Herridge *et al.*, 2003). During the investigation, women indicated that couples' leisure was important to them. Having in mind the framework of constraining factors that influenced the meanings of leisure for women, further investigation into Bulgarian women's romantic relationships will have implications for leisure as a site of reproduction and construction of gender power relations and or reproduction of stereotypical gendered leisure. An institutional approach to the relationship of leisure and family could also reveal important insights into family roles, allocation of resources and living in a nuclear family. Moreover, similar studies should be carried out about women in non-heterosexual relationships, to tackle issues of normative

heterosexuality within leisure studies and practical aspects of non-discriminatory leisure and recreation policies.

b) Further research on women's embodied lives

In the future, it is anticipated that research on women and leisure will continue emphasising the embodied politics of contemporary feminism: 'which is personal and often physical, bodily action that aims to provoke change by exercising and resisting power in everyday life' Fixmer and Wood (2005: 237-238). More research is needed in different cultural contexts as feminist leisure researchers now recognise the complexities of this type of analysis and the diversity of women globally.

c) Fieldwork in other Bulgarian cities

It is advised that future research endeavours include samples of women in other Bulgarian cities and women in different social and demographic circumstances to further examine the scope and nature of constraints to Bulgarian women's leisure. What is more, a macro-sociological level of analysis of women and leisure will contribute to a deeper understanding of the ways gender is socially constructed (Aitchison, 2003) through social institutions. Related issues of physical activity as an important element of women's mental and physical health is also uncharted territory within this context. Studies that focus specifically on sport and physical activity for women and girls will contribute to the meanings of leisure as they relate to women's health as a social issue. For instance, in this study, some women mentioned snowboarding and skiing as a serious leisure pursuit. Issues of participation of women in adventure sports are another topic for debate that deserves attention in future studies.

d) Other related issues for future research

This feminist case study opens the door for more detailed studies on issues such as:

- *The Western/Eastern work and leisure divide* – The notion of the East-West split that runs through this thesis is based on the division of Europe after the aftermath of the Second World War and the following period of the Cold War. The idea of superiority of the modern, democratic Western states over the communist satellite states of the Soviet Union in Central and Eastern Europe, which in time was transferred into academic and political rhetoric, is still debated by scholars (Verdery 1996). According to Verdery (1996) this cognitive divide resulted not only in a political and economic segregation but created knowledge and discourse based on dualistic principles, including some common myths and misconceptions about the differences and similarities of Western and Eastern socio-political contexts. Because of this divide, the European identity became split to 'True West' and the 'Eastern Other' (Browning and Lehti 2010) that create conflicting viewpoint among scholars in terms of knowledge creation. Therefore, future research into the East/West work-leisure divide will contribute to the ethnocentricity debates of contemporary leisure scholarship and the interdisciplinary field of feminist research. Moreover, it will contribute to knowledge about the similarities and differences of the gender regimes in the various countries and issues of equality.
- *The rural-urban and work/leisure gap spectrum* – Future investigation into the differences and similarities between women in urban and rural areas will also contribute to better understanding of Bulgarian women's leisure and the intersectional relations that contextualise the multiplicity of women's meanings. Moreover, in Bulgaria, the ethnic and religious minorities are primarily located in the rural areas an investigation into the intersectional power relations at play.
- *An in-depth comparison study of how different generations perceive contemporary gender issues* – Such an investigation will shine light on the gender trajectories and social change that are visible across the landscape of everyday life. A focus on the

generational gap and an Eastern/Western comparison will also contribute to the discussion of global and local structural forces that influence individual's lives.

- *An investigation into the male perspective on gender issues* – Feminist leisure studies will benefit from a study that focuses on the male perspective on gender issues. In fact, many key areas central to the lives of girls from a global perspective, such as girlspace, schools, work, aggression, sexuality and power should be related to discourses and ideologies of modern masculinity.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Location of Sofia

A map showing the location of the capital city of Sofia.



Source: <http://mapscityarena.tk/bulgaria-map/> (Accessed: 15 September 2015)

Appendix 2: Research assumptions

Assumptions are these potentially influencing expectations and beliefs for which the researcher has no empirical evidence and are out of her control, time or ability to investigate, but without which the study would be irrelevant (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010). Leedy and Ormrod (2010:62) posited, 'Assumptions are so basic that, without them, the research problem itself could not exist'. The following premises have been made by the researcher in this research inquiry and they form the foundation of the analysis:

- a) **The feminist researcher assumes that reality is subjective and multiple and can be grasped by the participants.** She also, assumes that research is context-bound is the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds. Furthermore, subjective meaning(s) is embedded in women's experiences, and that this meaning(s) can be mediated through the investigator's own perceptions and experience.
- b) **Sofian society is a gendered society and males and females experiences of paid work and leisure differ greatly.** In this gendered society, the roles for men and women are socially constructed and prescribed (Henderson *et al.*, 1996). The cultural and historical essence of women's lives indicates that these differences are created socially and that leisure behavior is learned within a culture (Rojek, 2000). For example, research on leisure differences has shown that women have different participation patters, assess and constraints to leisure (Henderson *et al.*, 1996). Thus, gender and social roles affect both man and women, but not always in the same way.
- c) **The researcher assumes that feminist perspective (as an ideology and social movement) has the potential to change the universal understanding of**

women's work and leisure and focus the attention on relevant, contemporary issues. In particular, third wave feminist critique on the meaning of gender as a social construction which includes cultural connotations associated with biological sex and the power relations in society (Henderson, 2013) is considered as the theoretical and empirical basis of this investigation.

- d) **In this study, the researcher assumes that the participants responded sincerely to her questions** without holding back information or purposefully misleading her. It is believed that as the researcher adheres to the principles of conducting ethical research and is guided by the principles of confidentiality, anonymity and voluntary participation the informants would not feel intimidated or hurt in any way.

- e) **It is assumed that the researcher is an unspeakable part of the conduct of feminist research,** providing a self-reflexive perspective and her insight helps broaden the understandings of contemporary Sofian women's leisure and work meaning(s)

Appendix 3: Strength and limitations of the case study design and presents some solutions to overcome the limitations

Contextual Strength	General limitations/criticisms of case study design	Solutions proposed to overcome the limitations
A case study design can contribute to understanding individual women's leisure and work meanings, within the contemporary socio-cultural context, as it allows for greater flexibility of methods and analytical techniques.	'Lack of rigor of case study research' (Yin, 2014:14). This critique is based on researcher's bias in interpretation of findings and conclusions.	As the unit of analysis is the individual person, and the research utilises an autoethnographic approach to enquiry, the researcher's bias is purposefully accounted for. Moreover, the researcher adhered to the trustworthiness criteria of evaluating qualitative research to address this concern.
It facilitates an 'in-depth' description of studied individual (s), which is central to the investigation.	Case studies provide little basis for generalisations of findings to other populations.	This study's purpose expanding or broadening theoretical understanding not statistical generalisation.
It enables the researcher to gather data from a variety of sources and to converge the data to illuminate the case.	One of the common pitfalls associated with case study is that there is a tendency for researchers to attempt to answer a question that is too broad or a topic that has too many objectives for one study.	To address this common problem the researcher carried out pilot study and adhered to Yin (2003) and Stake's (1995) suggestions to place boundaries on a case to ensure reasonable in scope of the study.

Adapted from Yin (2014); Baxter and Jack (2008)

Appendix 4: Appropriateness of the selected methods to the main study

The appropriateness of the data collection methods to the study sub-problems.

Research study sub-problems	Phase 2: Main Study Data collection methods	Contribution to the study
<p><i>Sub-problem 1:</i></p> <p>To explore Sofian women's subjective conceptualisations of leisure in order to capture the key characteristics of leisure for them.</p>	<p>Casual conversations;</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p>	<p>Casual conversations were chosen to identify meanings in Bulgarian language that might contribute to the subjective meanings of women's leisure that might not be uncovered by more structured techniques.</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews were used to gather empirical data about women's leisure in order to understand the meanings they attach to it.</p>
<p><i>Sub-problem 2:</i></p> <p>To investigate Sofian women's subjective conceptualisation of work in order to capture the juxtaposition of work and leisure for them.</p>	<p>Casual conversations;</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p>	<p>Casual conversations were chosen to identify meanings in Bulgarian language that might contribute to the subjective meanings of women's paid work that might not be uncovered by more structured techniques.</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews were used to gather empirical data about women's paid work in order to understand the meanings they attach to it.</p>
<p><i>Sub-problem 3:</i></p> <p>To uncover women's subjective perceptions of gendered discourses/ideologies in relation to work and leisure</p>	<p>Casual conversations;</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p>	<p>Casual conversations were used to assist the understanding of women's perceptions of the gendered social world.</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews were to probe into subjective women's perceptions of the effects of these gender roles and relations in their leisure</p>
<p>Sub-problem 1;</p> <p>Sub-problem 2;</p> <p>Sub-problem 3:</p>	<p>*autoethnography /personal narrative</p>	<p>The self-reflexive personal narrative was used to account for the researchers' biases and the difficulties she had to overcome during the investigation in order to better understand the role of the socio-cultural influences upon individual leisure choice and related meanings.</p>

Source: Researcher's own work

Appendix 5: Casual conversations – advantages, disadvantages and solutions to the disadvantages

Advantages	Disadvantages	Solutions to the disadvantages
'language is being used as a source to negotiate social identity and interpersonal relations' (Eggins and Slade 1997:9).	Casual conversations involving several participants are difficult to transcribe and analyse.	Memos and transcriptions of relevant casual conversations were made as soon as possible in order to record the information as accurately as possible without disruption the flow of communication.
The researcher and researched co-create the social reality.	Casual conversations between the researcher and the participants may be highly personal, which might affect researcher's agenda as she might not feel comfortable sharing such personal information, even for the sake of the inquiry.	The researcher is aware of the ethical implications of researching friends and acquaintances and thus she follows a code of personal and professional conduct that guards from unethical behavior or treatment of participants. Moreover strict anonymity and confidentiality of participants is followed.
Casual conversations between friends are often interpersonally motivated, and 'involve as much probing of differences between friends as confirming the similarities which brought them together as friends in the first place' (Eggins and Slade 1997:12).	In some cases the researcher had a hidden motive to engage the participants in casual conversations, as followed her research agenda.	The researcher role is an important one, and the investigator tried to carry out the research project to the best of her abilities, without compromising her agenda. Still in most cases she allowed the conversations to progress naturally until an indication of research focus appeared.

Source: Eggins and Slade (1997)

Appendix 6: Semi-structured interviews – advantages, disadvantages and solutions to the disadvantages

Advantages	Disadvantages	Solutions to the disadvantages
<p><u>Flexibility during the interview session</u></p> <p>A less structured approach allows for a more natural, informal interview, that allows the participants much more freedom of expression than a structured survey format. The researcher may probe for further depth of information as well.</p>	<p><u>Occasional refusal to respond</u></p> <p>The respondents are under no obligation to respond to the interviewer's questions. They may withdraw from the interview at any time. This may affect the overall quality of the data processing and analysis.</p>	<p><u>Paraphrasing the proposed interview questions</u></p> <p>If some questions remain unanswered the researcher may paraphrase the question and ask it again in a casual conversation.</p>
<p><u>face-to-face interviewing offers a possibility for the researcher to change his/hers line of questioning</u></p> <p>Following up on interesting responses the researcher may choose to pursue this line of questioning. Nonverbal cues can also be observed and interpreted.</p>	<p><u>Time-consuming and difficult to arrange and time</u></p> <p>Interviewing is time-consuming; it requires planning, coordination and scheduling of appointments that is not always an easy task. Sometimes it might be difficult to obtain cooperation from participants. Moreover, interviewing requires an array of interpersonal skills that not all researchers possess.</p>	<p><u>Revisit the interview guide after the pilot study fieldwork</u></p> <p>The initial areas of interest chosen for the unstructured interviews were revised by the investigator herself in order to narrow down the focus of the investigation.</p>
<p><u>Highly subjective views and attitudes are considered a strength</u></p> <p>The lack of standardisation of this method may raise concerns of reliability. In this case however, the inherent bias of the method is considered an advantage for this study, as it seeks to shine light on the subjectivities of women's lives.</p>	<p><u>Simultaneous translation and transcription is time-consuming, difficult and tedious task</u></p> <p>The process of transcribing and translating can take a toll on the researcher, which may result in linguistic loss of meaning, which is inevitable when translation work is carried out.</p>	<p><u>Take the time needed to minimise any inconsistencies and translation errors.</u></p> <p>The researcher allowed herself enough time to carefully carry out the dual process of translation and transcription in order to minimise the element of human error to the best of her ability.</p>

Source: Adapted from Robson (2011)

Appendix 7: Data types

Type of data	Characteristics of the type	How collected (devices for collection)	Examples from the study in the form of participant's quotations and researcher's reflexive thought
a) Description of leisure behaviour /pattern/ or habit	What people are seen or heard doing or saying	Observation notes, Transcriptions, Research diary	<i>'Depending on the season. In summer I would most likely go out after work for a while. In autumn I would go to the movies or the theater or some event. In winter I would go snowboarding at Vitosha Mountain or some home-related leisure and in the spring, again, in the bars in the parks, in the mountains somewhere. I'm trying to have different types and kinds of leisure experiences and activities; and as many as possible.'</i> (Svetlana)
b) Description of event	Piece of behaviour, defined either by the people in the setting (e.g. meeting, event) or by the researcher (e.g. argument, journey)	Observation notes, Research diary	<i>Oh, my god! I love snowboarding. You know that. Two years ago, when we were in Bansko, and we snowboarded until they closed the chairlift, and then on the way back to town, we decided to through the woods, and we saw a wolf, I'm not kidding. That was so awesome; we kind of snowboarded right past it. We couldn't believe it. Sasha said it was just a dog that looked like a wolf, but I'm sure it was a wolf.</i> (Angelia)
c) Description of Institutions and/or ideologies	The way the socio-cultural setting operates in terms of norms, traditions, etc.	Observation notes, Transcriptions, Research diary	<i>The aspiration to motherhood and the nuclear family are central in Bulgarian socio-culture. It is assumed that a woman should have at least one baby, before she turns 30 years of age, and supposedly, after that age, a woman's reproductive ability is considerably lessened. The ideology of motherhood and marriage are arguable putting women under pressure to find a partner and bear children, which results in women abandoning g their own independent leisure for the sake of matrimony. (Researcher's reflexive thought)</i>
d) Account	What people say to the researcher – actual words	Interview, audio-recording, Transcription, Verbatim notes	<i>My leisure is the time I'm not working. I mean besides the extra shifts, from Monday to Friday from 5.30 pm onwards and the weekend. That time includes the usual stuff, watching movies, having walks, shopping, in the summer I swimming in the open-air pool nearby, that's a favourite leisure activity of mine. Last year I went to the gym every day, but this year not that much.</i> (Ivanka)
e) Talk	What people are heard saying – actual words	Audio-recording, Transcriptions, Casual conversations notes	<i>'I'm so sick of this. Last Friday we didn't go out because he was working late and I fell asleep while waiting for him to come home. I got dressed up and everything. Can you imagine? Fell asleep on the couch. Me: Oh, that's a pity. We went to Alex's party. It was fun.</i> (Paula)
f) Self-reflexive account/narrative	What the researcher's experience of the phenomenon and the fieldwork	Research diary	<i>...we decided to go to the seaside, Angelia's boyfriend was not too happy about that, but she came along anyway...I love traveling, especially when it's just us girls...</i>

Source: adapted from Holliday (2002:71/72)

Appendix 8: Bricolage – Strengths, Weaknesses and Solutions

Bricolage- Strengths proposed by Kincheloe (2001, 2005), perceived to be relevant to this study	Bricolage – Weaknesses identified by Kincheloe (2001, 2005) perceived to impact upon this study	Bricolage – Solutions proposed by the researcher to minimise the weaknesses identified by Kincheloe (2001, 2005)
<p><u>Bricolage signifies interdisciplinarity</u></p> <p>Bricoleurs use multiple methodologies and perspectives in their research endeavours in an attempt to synthesize contemporary developments of social theory, epistemology and interpretation.</p>	<p><u>Superficiality of findings</u></p> <p>The main criticism of interdisciplinarity and hence bricoleurship is the assumption that it is by nature superficial. In other words, researchers fail to devote sufficient time to understand the disciplinary and knowledge bases from which particular modes or research emerges, which results in superficiality.</p>	<p><u>Reviewing the literature</u></p> <p>The researcher inspected the literature from different social science domains in order to apply the principle of bricoleurship. For instance, the fields of cultural studies and gender studies.</p>
<p><u>Bricoleurs recognise the limitations of a single method or approach</u></p> <p>Bricoleurs understand the need for rigorous research and the necessity of new forms of rigour in the research process because they recognise the benefit of combining multiple perspectives to develop or extend traditional practices and modes of inquiry.</p>	<p><u>Methodologically frustrating</u></p> <p>In their quest to avoid reductionist knowledge production bricoleurs engage with different disciplinary domains. This process may be frustrating for the novice and experienced researchers alike.</p>	<p><u>Application of new and familiar methodologies.</u></p> <p>The researcher investigated and compared new and familiar methodologies and epistemologies in order to choose the most appropriate for the study, following the principles of the bricolage.</p>
<p><u>Expanding the boundaries of knowledge production</u></p> <p>Bricoleurs embrace the active role of both the researcher and the researched in both shaping the reality and the process of research and narratives that represent them. Thus they challenge the deterministic views of social reality and standardised modes of knowledge production.</p>	<p><u>Time-consuming</u></p> <p>Bricoleurship requires lifetime commitment to study, clarify, and create the bricolage, which cannot be accomplished within the span of a doctoral program alone.</p>	<p><u>Making an effort</u></p> <p>The researcher acknowledges the practical and institutional limitations of her doctoral program, which allows only limited time for immersion in the different disciplines and research methodologies. Still, she adopts the principles of the bricolage and follows it to the best of her abilities.</p>

Source: Adapted from Kincheloe (2001; 2005)

Appendix 9: Crystallisation – Strengths, Limitations and Problems to overcome

Crystallisation – Strengths, as identified by Ellingson (2009), and perceived to impact upon this research study	Crystallisation – Limitations and problematic areas as identified by Ellingson (2009) that may impact upon this study	Crystallisation – Possible solutions to the limitations, applied by the researcher in the present study
<p><u>A framework for bringing together different genres and forms of analysis within the continuum of qualitative methods</u></p> <p>The researcher utilises this principle by utilising two genres of writing: reporting and the personal narrative, which are often considered dichotomous and therefore mutually exclusive.</p>	<p><u>Requires significant knowledge of multiple genres and forms of analysis</u></p> <p>The novice researcher/fieldworker may not always be fluent in the multiple genres and forms of analysis.</p>	<p><u>A balance between preparation and improvisation</u></p> <p>The researcher adopted a principle of balanced, self-reflexive crystallisation that included on one hand self-training and planning of the research process and on the other open-mindedness about the exploratory nature of the real-world research and its evolution. For instance, Kelly's dialectical approach to leisure was initially used to underpin the focus of the inquiry, and for learning about leisure theorising as well.</p>
<p><u>With crystallisation 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) is possible.</u></p> <p>The researcher in this study uses autoethnography to provide more description of the cultural meaning of the studied phenomenon</p>	<p><u>Time-consuming activity</u></p> <p>Crystallisation requires constant reflection and interpretation that can be increasingly tiresome and overwhelming process and can affect other research activities negatively.</p>	<p><u>Involvement of participants in the interpretation of findings</u></p> <p>The researcher consulted with some of the participants following crystallisation of findings in order to minimise the possibility of misinterpretation or misrepresentation.</p>
<p><u>Crystallisation empowers researchers to go beyond the generic boundaries of conventional academic writing</u></p> <p>The researcher has more freedom to portray accounts that gravitate towards both narrative/creative writing and scientific analysis.</p>	<p><u>There is a lack of recognition of crystallisation as a viable methodological framework</u></p> <p>Readers and audiences are often sceptical and critical about multigenre research projects and perceive them as self-contradictory and inconsistent, which leads them to be suspicious about the rigour of the analysis</p>	<p><u>Compatibility with the feminist methodology</u></p> <p>The researcher applied the trustworthiness criterion in order to address any rigour issues that might occur. Moreover, feminist ethical principles of conducting research are compatible to the ethical decision making in crystallisation and that is way they are compatible.</p>

Source: Adapted from Ellingson (2009)

Appendix 10: Semi-structured interview guide

The interview schedule is comprised of themes and questions devised by the researcher to guide the interview sessions with participants during Phase 2: Main Study fieldwork. It consists three distinct parts. Part 1: Introductory part; Part 2: Work and Leisure; Part 3: Women's perceptions of leisure and the socio-cultural discourses and ideologies

Part 1: Introductory Phase:

- Repeat the main problem of the investigation, its purpose and focus to the interviewee
- Explain the interview process and introduce the interview guide to the participant
- Produce a copy of the interview guide and discuss any possible concerns the participants might have in relation to her participation
- Address any questions the interviewees might have
- Make notes of number of interview session, date and location
- Reiterate the rights of the participants to withdraw from participation at any time, and their right to anonymity and confidentiality
- Ask permission to use audio-recording device during the session

Part 2: Work and Leisure interface

- What is your current occupation?
- How many hours do you work per week?
- Tell me more about your work?
- Are you happy/satisfied with your work?
- What does work mean to you?
- What are the positive and negative sided of being employed/of working/ having your profession in relation to leisure?
- What do you understand by the term 'leisure'?
- What does it mean to you?
- Are you satisfied with the leisure you have?
- Is leisure important to you?
- How do you choose your leisure?

- What part of your life is leisure?
- Tell me more about what you usually do after work during the week?
- Tell me more about how do you usually spend your weekend?
- Are there ways in which your work prevents you from engaging in leisure?
- Are there ways in which your work helps you engage in leisure?
- As leisure change during the life course, which leisure pursuits would you say you still practice and why?
- What benefits do you receive from leisure?
- Do you have a favourite leisure activity?

Part 3: Women's perceptions of leisure and the socio-cultural discourses and ideologies

- In your view what is the primary role of women in Sofian society nowadays.
- What do these roles mean to you?
- In your view what should women's roles be?
- Do you think there is gender-appropriate leisure in Sofian society?
- What do you think about working man's leisure?
- In your view are there enough opportunities for women's leisure outside of home?
- How do you express yourself outside of work?
- Have you ever been treated unfairly because of your gender?

Concluding part:

- Express gratitude to the interview for taking part in the investigation
- Discuss options for a follow-up discussion of the provided information
- Address any questions or other issues arising
- Note interview end time

Appendix 11: Approaches considered for data analysis and rationale for rejecting them

Method considered (and approaches to analysis)	Definition and possible application and strength	Reasons for rejecting the method
Discourse analysis - linguistic approach - socio-psychological approach - critical discourse <i>(all approaches emanate from different disciplines and have distinctive characteristics)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'A particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world' (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002:12) • The language itself is the focus of research interest. • The study of language can provide the key to understanding our social functioning (Robson 2011) • It falls within the relativist, social constructionist view of social reality. • 'it is possible to create one's own approach from different discourse analytical perspectives and, if appropriate, non-discourse analytical perspectives. Such <i>multiperspectival</i> work is not only permissible but positively valued in most forms of discourse analysis'.(Jørgensen and Phillips 2002:15) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The author refrained from applying any form of discourse analysis mainly for two reasons. Firstly, the approach requires a specialist expertise and an appreciation of the underlying theoretical background of each specific approach, which the researcher had only basic knowledge of. • Secondly, as data is translated from one language to another the semantic loss that occur, have consequences for the production and interpretation of meanings, which would compromise the trustworthiness of the research study.
Conversation analysis:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'The systematic analysis of the talk produced in everyday situations of human interaction: talk-in-interaction' (Hutchby and Wooffitt 2008:11). • It is underpinned by the sociological approach of <i>ethnomethodology</i> (Garfinkel 1967; 1996) • It focuses on ordinary everyday interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This approach was initially considered because of its alternative view on the social order dynamics: the dialectic between talk, meaning. However, this approach was also dismissed for the reasons above and additionally, because of its claim that the analysis of data should not be initially constrained by prior theoretical assumptions,
Meta-analysis:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meta – analysis is a process used in summarising the results of number of different studies (Robson 2011:375) • 'Now widely accepted as a method of summarising the results of empirical studies within the behavioral, social and health sciences (Lipsey and Wilson, 2000) • Useful for identifying which questions have been studied and which remain unanswered. Also, which populations are more likely to yield results etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meta – analysis is not deemed appropriate for analysing data from interview transcripts. • It is not suitable for the study of Sofian, women's leisure because a paucity of information and empirical research finding exists.

Source: Adapted from Lipsey and Wilson (2000); Jørgensen and Phillips (2002:12); Robson (2011)

Appendix 12: Thematic analysis – Advantages, Disadvantages and Proposed Solutions

Thematic analysis - Advantages	Thematic analysis - Disadvantages	Thematic analysis - Proposed Solutions to minimise the disadvantages
<p><u>Flexibility and universality</u></p> <p>This type of analysis can be used effectively with all types of qualitative data.</p>	<p><u>Isolating data analysis from data collection and interpretation</u></p> <p>Because of the flexibility of the approach, sometimes the researcher may see the data analysis process as separate from both data collection and interpretation. As a consequence, the iterative aspect of the analytical process can be lost.</p>	<p><u>Data is subject to continues inspection</u></p> <p>The researcher's engagement with the data is a subject of constant scrutiny from the beginning of the pilot study to the final integration and presentation of the findings. The researcher used her research diary and the NVivo 11 notes, to write down any possible interpretations throughout the fieldwork.</p>
<p><u>Relatively straightforward and easy to utilise</u></p> <p>It is comparatively easy to learn and use in comparison with other qualitative approaches that require an in-depth knowledge of their theoretical and philosophical underpinnings.</p>	<p><u>Presenting a descriptive account</u></p> <p>Sometimes there is the possibility of too much description or exploration with limited attempt for interpretation of the data. In this way, the data is not exploited and is not interpretive of the respondent's world.</p>	<p><u>Data is interpreted to produce 'thick description'</u></p> <p>In order to avoid the pitfall of simply describing the findings, the researcher used a range of tactics proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), such as noting patterns, themes and/or trends within the data and identifying relations between them that generate meaning.</p>
<p><u>It fits well with the feminist methodology of this inquiry</u></p> <p>This method of analysis is particularly useful when the researcher seeks to address issues of feminist methodology because it is not tied to a particular level of interpretation and can be used in a wide variety of fields including feminist philosophy of knowledge.</p>	<p><u>Lack of information about processes undertaken</u></p> <p>It is not uncommon for researchers to claim that thematic coding analysis has been done without providing enough information about the analytical process itself, leaving the reader with little sense of the actual steps taken to arrive at the findings.</p>	<p><u>Detailed account of the data analysis is provided</u></p> <p>The researcher provides a detailed account of the phases of thematic coding analysis and procedure in Chapter 3, Methodology.</p>

Source: Adapted from Froggatt (2001) and Robson (2011)

Appendix 13: Advantages, disadvantages of QDA packages and rationale for using NVivo 11

General Advantages of using a QDA packages	General Disadvantages of using a QDA packages	Rationale for using Nvivo 11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an organised single location storage system for all materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proficiency in using a QDA takes time and effort. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The researcher attended training sessions, provided by the university, as she did not have previous experience with NVivo 11.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give quick and easy access to coded material. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There may be difficulties in changing, or reluctance to change categories of information, once they have been established. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The researcher did not experience any reluctance to make changes to the codes, as NVivo 11 has been upgraded in this regard to allow easy corrections, at a click of a mouse.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make handling large amount of data quick and easy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some programs tend to impose specific approaches to data analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NVivo 11 is not one of these programs. It does not carry out the interpretation instead of the researcher. It only facilitates the coding process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help the development of consistent coding schemes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a tendency among some authors to think that simply because they have used specialist software they have carried out a worthwhile analysis. A focus on coding can give less emphasis to interpretation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To avoid this pitfall the researcher adheres to the trustworthiness criteria of qualitative research (Guba and Lincoln 1985). Both processes are considered equally important for rigorous qualitative research.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help analyse differences, similarities and relationships between coded elements. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a range of ways to display and visualise findings. 		

Source: Robson (2011:472)

Appendix 14: Research ethics

The BSA's, (2002) 'Statement of ethical practice' and the National Association of Social Workers' 'Code of Ethics' (NASWCE, 2008) was used to guide the researcher

Statement of ethical practice	Principles of ethical practice	Researcher's applied techniques for ethical conduct
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional integrity and safeguarding the dignity and worth of every person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguard the proper interests of participants. Report the findings accurately and truthfully. Treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion and be mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The researcher used pseudonyms to conceal the women's identities. The researcher consulted some of the participants during the interpretation and analysis of the data. Act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organisations with which they are affiliated.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships with and responsibilities towards research participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the physical, social and psychological well-being of research participants is not adversely affected by the research. Participation should be freely chosen based on informed consent. Participants have the rights to refuse participation, withdraw from the study at any given time and refuse to be audio-recorded. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use clear and understandable language to inform participants of the purpose of the investigation, possible risks related to the process of data collection. The researcher reiterated the purpose of the research study, the rationale so that participants can make informed decisions about participation. Ask permission to use audio-recording device.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anonymity, Privacy and Confidentiality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The anonymity and privacy of those who participate in the research process should be respected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The identities of participants are protected through the use of 'false names'. The data is stored in a password protected hard drive.

Source: British Sociological Association's 'Statement of ethical practice' (BSA, 2002) and the National Association of Social Workers' 'Code of Ethics' (NASWCE, 2008)

Appendix 15: Application of Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria and techniques for establishing trustworthiness of the research study

Criteria for establishing trustworthiness	Techniques chosen for establishing trustworthiness	Developing trustworthiness in this research study
Credibility: 'The concept refers to the truth of the data or the participant views and the interpretation and representation of them by the researcher' (Cope, 2014:89).	Crystallisation Member checking Reflexivity/ Autoethnography	Data is crystallised using different methods, theories and perspectives. Participants are asked to confirm transcriptions and interpreted findings. Through the personal narrative method the researcher displays the workings of the self, emotionally, and cognitively (Ellingson, 2009). She describes her experience as a researcher.
Transferability: Transferability refers to findings that can be applied to other settings or groups (Cope, 2014:89). In this study the transferability criterion refers to whether the findings have meaning to the informants and others that have not participated in the research study, and, also, whether the readers can associate their personal experience with the findings (Cope, 2014).	Thick Description	The researcher provides sufficient information about the study participants and the research setting and socio-cultural context, in order to help the audience make an informed decision about transferability of the findings.
Dependability: Dependability refers to the constancy of the data over similar conditions (Cope, 2014).	Audit Trail	The researcher kept a detailed record of her activities while carrying out the study. The audit trail consists of recording times and dates, locations and names of the informants.
Conformability: 'Confirmability refers to the researcher's ability to demonstrate that the data represent the participants' responses and not the researcher's biases or viewpoints' (Cope, 2014:89).	Examples of Data Types Audit Trail	The audit trail also includes all the raw data collected by the researcher during both phases of data collection (e.g. audio-recordings, transcripts and field notes). The researcher can provide a detailed account of how conclusions and interpretations are established and exemplify through participant's quotations how the findings are derived from them.
Authenticity: 'Authenticity refers to the ability and extent to which the researcher expresses the feelings and emotions of the participant's experiences in a faithful manner' (Cope, 2014:89).	The Reflexive Journal Reflexivity/Personal narrative	The researcher's reflexive journal contains monthly methodological logs and personal entries that describe the interaction between participants and researcher. Autoethnography is also used to exemplify the researcher's value-laden perspective and interpretations.

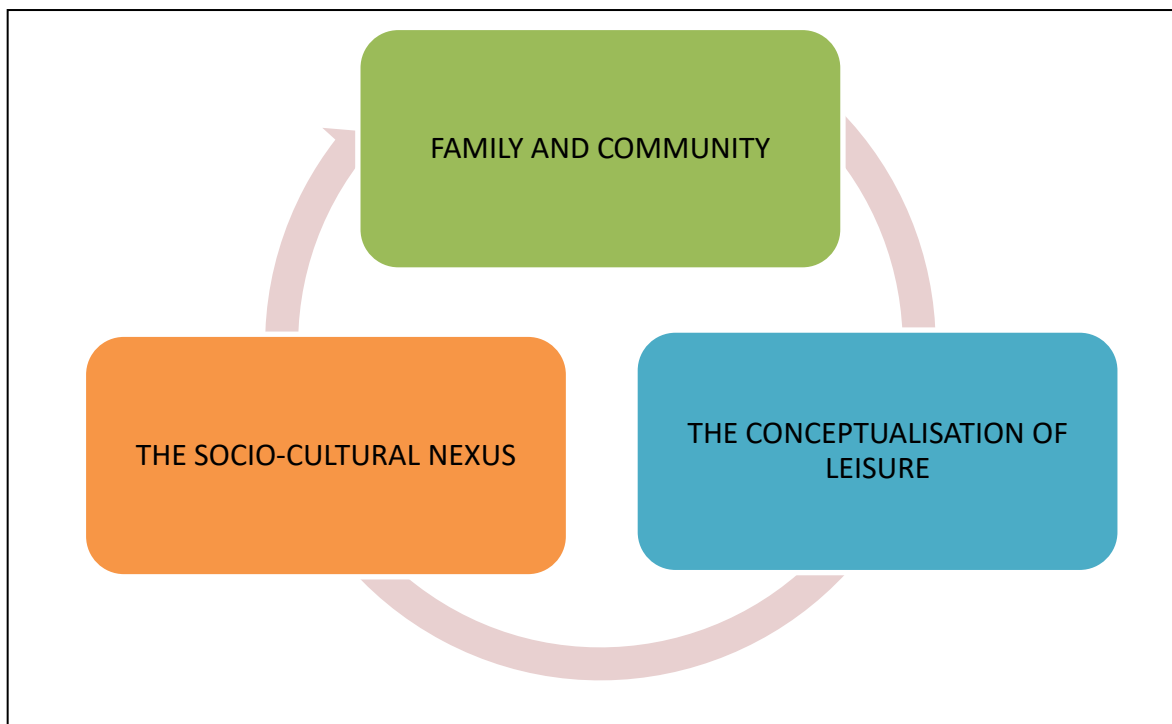
Adapted from Guba and Lincoln (1985) and Cope (2014)

Appendix 16: The dialectics of leisure (pilot study thematic framework)

For the pilot study phase of the fieldwork, the researcher considered Kelly's (1987) dialectical approach to leisure that encompass leisure opposing theories to investigate women's leisure and what might be problematic in the everyday world women. For the purpose of the preliminary investigation, the conceptual dimensions illustrated in Figure 1 was created to guide the study and the analysis of the preliminary findings. The figure shows three theoretical frames: family and community; personal and social identity and the conceptualisation of leisure.

The framework of the study is a key part of this inquiry and is defined by the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs the research investigation at this stage (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Robson, 2011) According to Kelly (1987), the dialectical analysis provides a suitable way to approach complex multidimensional leisure phenomenon by considering both the social and the individual aspects.

Figure 1: The sequence of conceptual dimensions of the study



Source: Adapted from Kelly (1987)

The conceptual frames shown in Figure 1 were used as underlying themes of debate, during the interviews. They are discussed below and the rationale for choosing them is presented.

a) Work and the Conceptualisation of Leisure

As previously examined, the differentiation between work and leisure is the core of all definitions of leisure. However, as work is not just a matter of paid employment but also includes domestic labour and childcare responsibilities, it is important to investigate the work–leisure relationship in particular cultural context and social circumstances (Green *at al.* 1990; Lewis 2007). In light of this premise, study problem 1 was initially designed to explore Sofian women's 'work–life balance' (WLB) more thoroughly by inquiring about the role of work and leisure in their everyday lives. (Hilbrecht, 2007). A conclusion drawn from the interdisciplinary literature on the work–leisure relationship is that there are four reoccurring themes in the conceptualisation of leisure (leisure as residual time; leisure as activity; leisure as functional and leisure as freedom), which are well documented and criticised by feminist theorists like Gregory (1982), Stockdale (1985) and Wimbush (1986) for its androcentricity . Moreover, the varied nature of employment implies that it is unlikely a grand, overarching theory of the work–leisure relationship is possible. That is why, in order to advance the understanding of women's leisure at the preliminary stage of the investigation the following definition of leisure based on Kelly (1987: 49):

- Leisure is decision, an act as well as a state. Decision is not external to the phenomenon but integral to its nature.
- Leisure is creation, a product of decision and action.
- Leisure is a process, not fixed but developing and created in its time and place.
- Leisure is situated, constructed in an ever-new context
- Leisure is production in the sense that its meaning is always reproduced in its situation rather than appropriated from some external source.
- Leisure is an act, whole and complex with its history, emotion, interpretation, episodic development and tells.

This working definition have been selected to assist the researcher with the initial interpretation of findings and help delimit the investigation, as the topic of work–life balance of working women is a research topic in itself, which due to temporal and other practical limitations the this research does not focus on.

b) Family and Community

Family and community were selected because leisure is not just an activity determined by work, but is seen as a context for social interaction, bonding, intimacy and friendship within

the community. Kelly (1987) argues that just like any other areas of life, leisure has roles. So, there is an on-going dilemma between the roles actors play in accordance to their position and place in a social institution (Kelly, 1987). Sub-problem 2 was initially designed to inquire into the gendered power relations inherent in the Sofian society by exploring Sofian women's leisure choice. After the pilot study findings As Kelly (1987:93) notes 'Leisure is one life domain in which the creation of identity may be negated and distorted by the pressures and repressions of a mass society'.

c) The socio-cultural nexus

According to Kelly (1999:61), 'culture as learned and transmitted knowledge, norms, symbol systems, worldviews, and values, is, of course, the basis of all social behaviour. Leisure is always of the culture; it is ethnics'. This means that leisure is a social phenomenon; 'it is learned in a specific social and historical time and place' (Kelly 1999:61). Consequently, sub-problems 2 and 3 (number two, looking into the gendered relations inherent in Sofian society and number three, looking at leisure as a context of self-expression and identity) are both designed to inquire into the specific cultural symbols and meanings of the leisure behaviour of professional women in Sofia, in order to discover components and processes of gender power relations. Tracing the relationship between leisure and culture in a dialectical manner is also essential to the research project as leisure is more than behaviour; it carries symbolic meaning (Kelly, 1999).

Appendix 17: Pilot Study: Informed consent form

Informed Consent Form to participate in a One-On-One Interview with audiotyping.

I would like to invite you to take part in the preliminary phase of my research study with the working

title: **LEISURE DIALECTICS: A STUDY OF EMPLOYED WOMEN AND SOCIO-CULTURE IN SOFIA**

This is a feminist leisure research study that is being conducted by Ms Stefani Kaldaramova, a PhD research student at the University of Bedfordshire.

Aim of the Study:

The aim of the study is to investigate whether employed women's leisure choices can be seen as a manifestation of empowerment, self-expression/gender identity and individual resistance to the dominant socio-cultural ideologies by inquiring into women's everyday lives.

The study seeks to:

- 1) Explore the interrelatedness of work and leisure choices of employed women in Sofia.
- 2) To inquire into women's leisure choices, experiences and practices and examine how they are linked to power and power relations in the social world.
- 3) To inquire into the meaning and significance of leisure as the fabric of personal and social identity.

What will be done?

You will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview (in BG language) which will take approximately 1h. With your permission, I will audiotape and take notes during the interview. The audio recording is necessary to accurately record the information you provide, and will be used for the purpose of this research study only. The interview will include questions about your everyday life, your work/profession, leisure practices and experiences. You will also be asked some demographic information (e.g., age, marital status, number of children, education level) so that I can accurately describe the general traits of the group of women who participate in the study.

Benefits of this Study:

You will be contributing to the existing body of feminist research about women and leisure in relation to traditional social structures, power relations and stereotypical gender roles. As this study seeks to address gaps in leisure scholarship about contemporary issues of gender and leisure, your participation in this study will allow the presentation of a new, dynamic interpretation of the role of leisure in women's lives that come from a non-western cultural perspective. Its aim is to raise awareness of relevant issues and give voice to the participants. It will help rethink the traditional cultural assumptions about the significance and value of leisure for both man and women.

Risks or discomforts:

No risks or discomforts are anticipated from taking part in this study. If you feel uncomfortable with a question, you can choose not to answer or withdraw from the study altogether. If you decide to quit at any time before we have finished the interview, you are free to do so.

Confidentiality:

Your responses will be kept completely confidential. If the findings of this study are published or presented, individual names and other personally identifiable information will not be used.

To minimize the risks to confidentiality, I will take extra security measures in storing the data in a password protected folder. At the end of the interview, I will ask your permission to use quotations from our session for my doctoral thesis. If you agree to let me use quotations, I will NOT include your name.

When the research is completed, I may save the audio files and notes for use in future research done by myself. I will retain these records for up to 2 years after the study is over. The same measures described above will be taken to protect confidentiality of this study data.

How the findings will be used:

The findings of the study will be used for scholarly purposes only. They will be presented in educational settings and at professional conferences, and the results might be published in a professional journal in the fields of Leisure Studies, Cultural Studies, Women Studies and other Social Sciences. As I will ask you about a number of different aspects of your everyday life, leisure, work etc., it is likely that the emergent data will be used to trigger further investigation of the aspects regarding contemporary of women's leisure and the relevant issues.

Contact information:

If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to contact me. I can be reached at 0988 31 80 31 or Stefani.kaldaramov@beds.ac.uk. You can also contact my director of studies - Professor Keith Hollinshead at: Khdeva@btopenworld.com. Additionally, if you have any concerns about this study or the way that you have been approached, please contact the University's independent contact, Prof Angus Duncan, Secretary to the University Research Ethics Committee angus.duncan@beds.ac.uk

By giving your consent, you acknowledge that you have read this information and agree to participate in this research, with the knowledge that you are free to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your own records.

If you wish to participate in this study, please sign and date below.

Participant's Name

Participant's Signature

Date

Appendix 18: Pilot Study – Participant Observations

An extract from researcher's methodological diary containing researcher's participant observations

Observation Notes
Recorded occasion: snowboarding trip
Date: 7 March 2014
<p>Angelia looks a bit tired; she had previously stated that she can't stay for too long because she has an early start the next day. She proposes a trip to Bansko, for the end of the season the following weekend, as the ski passes are discounted. Anna agreed, she had bought new equipment the previous season, but she had not had a chance to use it yet. She said she'd try to manage this time and appeared enthusiastic. Anna had come to the meeting after long, exhausting discussion with her boss about a pay raise and appeared distracted.</p> <p>Ivanka said that she can't make it next weekend because she had to take an additional shift at work. She did not mind, it seemed.</p> <p>Angelia, had previously confided in me, over the phone that she really wanted to go to Bansko because she had some friends there that she wanted to meet up with them.</p> <p>Maya, appeared unimpressed by Angelia's suggestion and said that she doesn't know yet and it depends on how much work she'd have this week.</p>
Name of Actors: Angelia, Anna, Ivanka, Maya
Location: a restaurant
Activity: conversation/discussion

Source: Author's own work

Appendix 19: Pilot Study – Casual conversation

An extract from a casual conversation between the investigator and a pilot study participant.

Data:	20 march 2014
Participants:	Stefani, Anna
Language:	Bulgarian
Time:	7.35pm- 8pm
Location:	At a bar
Additional information:	I was waiting for some friends to show up for a get together. I was a bit early and I was sitting at the bar, drinking cognac and tea. I looked through the window and saw my friend Anna passing by, I jumped out and shouted after her. She came back with me and decided to wait with me until the others come. We started talking.
Stage 1: typical, customary greetings	<p>Anna: Hey, what's up....Oh, my God, it's so cold, isn't it...</p> <p>Stefani: Yeah, it's freezing, that's why I'm having some cognac and tea.</p> <p>Anna: Can I put these bags underneath your chair, thanks... (She had gone shopping). So, how is it going? Have you finished with your data collection and what not....</p> <p>Stefani: Yeah, almost done, I got one more interview left and then I'm going back to Luton...</p> <p>Anna: Oh, ok, that's great. I can't wait to read the results. Who are you waiting for...?</p> <p>Stefani: Some fiends from high school...just for a bit though and then I'm going home after. They might go bowling or something...I don't know...</p>
Stage 2: talk of unrelated to the research topics	<p>Anna: I went shopping because I got invited to a <i>позача</i> (Bulgarian)*, i.e., (<i>baby shower</i>) and I need a present. I can't go tomorrow because I won't have time...probably, we've had big event coming up and I'm so busy at work...and I want to go to yoga after work.</p> <p><i>*позача (pogacha) is the Bulgarian tradition of celebrating a birth of a baby. Unlike the Western tradition of baby shower that is usually celebrated before the baby is born, within the Bulgarian tradition the celebration is done 40 days after the birth of a child. It is believed that only after 40 days the baby is strong enough to be presented to friends and more distant relatives. This ritual is rooted in old cultural, Christian orthodox traditions and folklore superstitions about the family and motherhood.</i></p> <p>Stefani: Oh yeah? Who's had a baby?</p> <p>Anna: more like, who is not having a baby...(laughs). Do you remember my friend from uni, Mirela, she is.</p> <p>Stefani: I know right, a lot of my friends are either getting married or having babies of both.</p>

<p>Stage 3: Research Focus</p>	<p>Anna: Well, yeah, that is what's expected of us. To get married and have children.</p> <p>Stefani: What do you mean?</p> <p>Anna: Just that, in my opinion everyone is expecting us to, you know...soon...</p> <p>Stefani: I guess so...Do you want to get married and have children?</p> <p>Anna: Of course! As long as my future husband does not expect me to just stop being myself.</p> <p>Stefani: What do you mean by that?</p> <p>Anna: You know, just as long as he does not expect me to stop developing professionally, or stop going out because we're going to have children, or expects me to sit at home and cook all day.</p> <p>Stefani: Right, I understand. Oh, here comes Kiril. Are you staying for another drink or...?</p>
<p>Stage 4: closure phase.</p>	<p>Anna: No, I'd better go...get some dinner on the way home and catch up on Shameless.</p> <p>Stefani: Ok, see you in the spring then, yeah...good luck with your event thing...</p> <p>Anna: thanks, see ya...</p> <p>After a giving me a hug, she left the bar and went on her way.</p>

Source: Author's own work

Appendix 20: Pilot Study – Unstructured interview guide

This interview template presents the phase of the unstructured interview and the themes and related questions the researcher utilised during the process of communication. The researcher had prepared this template in advance, which revolves around the topics of interest. However, the interview style is flexible, allowing for an open dialogue to occur between the researcher and the interviewee. Additional probes and other questions were used to further focus the investigation of women's everyday experiences of work and leisure and their meanings.

Part 1: Introduction

The initial part of the interview session includes:

1. Reiterate the purpose and focus of the study to the participant
2. Explain the process of interviewing and its format
3. Address any questions the interviewee might have
4. Provide a copy of the template if necessary
5. Ask permission to record the conversation

Part 2: Continuity and Change in the Life Course: Work and leisure

- Tell me about yourself. Who is (participant's name)?
- Tell me about your high school years and what did you do for leisure?
- Tell me more about later years, in university?
- What is the most important thing in your life right now?
- Tell me about your family?
- What do you do at the moment?
- Do you have favorite leisure?

Part 3: End matters:

- Thank the interviewee for agreeing to part take in the preliminary stages of the research inquiry
- Note any arising issues and note interview end time

Appendix 21: Pilot study – Unstructured interview

An extract from an unstructured interview with one of the pilot study participants

Participant: Yana Time: 7pm Language: Bulgarian Date: 06 March 2014 Location: Yana's apartment Theme: work and leisure Audio-recorder, translated and transcribed		
	Interview	Thematic analysis
Stefani	<i>So, tell me about your adolescence, in terms of leisure?</i>	
Yana	Well, these were some fun years, my family moved from the city centre to the suburbs in a big, new house. We had much more space and a big yard, which was great. Unfortunately, our new home was far away from school so I had to wake up earlier than before. My mom has always had big expectations for her children and she encouraged me and my brother us to take up a sport or like a dance class or something...I always wanted to be a painter or a photographer but I lost my interest round that time...In high school I used to play tennis, like a lot too....I don't anymore, I guess I just lost interest with age....	
Stefani	<i>And after high school?</i>	
Yana	I graduated from high school and I went to study in Germany, I was very excited about it, I've always dreamed of studying abroad. I was lucky that my parents were well off and I could afford it. Many of my friends went to study abroad too. It's fun and exciting, you meet people all over the world and you learn new stuff all the time... I used to travel back for the holidays. It was so strange, sometimes I wouldn't even want to come back home, and other times I couldn't imagine not coming back for the holidays.	
Stefani	<i>Yeah, I've been there...</i>	
Yana	Oh, yeah....	
Stefani	<i>So let's talk about your present situation...what was your motivation to come back to Sofia?</i>	
Yana	Oh, you know, it took me some to realise that although I loved living abroad and it's good to be living in a progressive society	

	but it is also hard to be away from your family and friends. I wanted to settle down somewhere, finally, you know... I've been travelling a lot for the past few years and I it was time to make a decision. I chose to come back to Sofia.	
Stefani	<i>So what do you do now?</i>	
Yana	I am an assistant project manager in an engineering company. I started a few months ago, so I'm still getting the hang of it, but I enjoy it so far.	
Stefani	<i>Ok, so what do you do after work?</i>	
Yana	I love meeting new people and being surrounded by a lot of friends. Now, that I think about it, I'm an absolute party animal, I love going out and going to parties. I've done it all my life...I loved partying with my international friends too. I learned beer pong from them...(laughs)	
Stefani	<i>So tell me what do you do after work?</i>	
Yana	During the week, after work I usually have dinner and immediately go to bed, I just don't have strength left for anything else.'	
Stefani	<i>What is leisure for you?</i>	
Yana	For me leisure is the time I'm not working. For me that's all the time I'm not in the office, basically. Now, my leisure is pretty structured, I work 9 to 5pm and then I decide what I want to do. Recently, I've been hanging out with my boyfriend. He's very enthusiastic about travelling and I'm too. We try to make plans together, mostly...	

Source: Author's work

Appendix 22: Main Study – Informed consent form

Informed Consent Form to participate in a One-On-One Interview with audiotyping.

I would like to invite you to take part in the main phase of my research study with the title:

WORK AND LEISURE TODAY: A FEMINIST INSPECTION IN SOFIA

This is a feminist leisure research study that is being conducted by Ms Stefani Kaldaramova, a PhD research student at the University of Bedfordshire.

The Purpose of the research study:

The purpose of this research study is to understand the subjective leisure meanings of full-time employed women in Sofia, in relation to the dominant gender ideologies and/or gender discourses which occur across the broader Bulgarian society.

The study seeks to:

- 1) To explore Sofian women's subjective conceptualisations of leisure in order to capture the key characteristics of leisure for them.
- 2) To investigate Sofian women's subjective conceptualization of work in order to capture the juxtaposition of work and leisure for them.
- 3) To uncover women's subjective perceptions of gendered discourses/ideologies in relation to work and leisure

What will be done?

You will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview (in BG language) which will take approximately one and a half hours. With your permission, I will audiotape and take notes during the interview. The audio recording is necessary to accurately record the information you provide, and will be used for the purpose of this research study only. The interview will include questions about your everyday life, your work/profession, leisure practices and experiences. You will also be asked some demographic information (e.g., age, marital status, number of children, education level) so that I can accurately describe the general traits of the group of women who participate in the study.

Benefits of this Study:

You will be contributing to the existing body of feminist research about women and leisure in relation to traditional social structures, power relations and stereotypical gender roles. As this study seeks to address gaps in leisure scholarship about contemporary issues of gender and leisure, your participation in this study will allow the presentation of a new, dynamic interpretation of the role of leisure in women's lives that come from a non-western cultural perspective. Its aim is to raise awareness of relevant issues and give voice to the participants. It will help rethink the traditional cultural assumptions about the significance and value of leisure for both man and women.

Risks or discomforts:

No risks or discomforts are anticipated from taking part in this study. If you feel uncomfortable with a question, you can choose not to answer or withdraw from the study altogether. If you decide to quit at any time before we have finished the interview, you are free to do so.

Confidentiality:

Your responses will be kept completely confidential. If the findings of this study are published or presented, individual names and other personally identifiable information will not be used.

To minimize the risks to confidentiality, I will take extra security measures in storing the data in a password protected folder. At the end of the interview, I will ask your permission to use quotations from our session for my doctoral thesis. If you agree to let me use quotations, I will NOT include your name.

When the research is completed, I may save the audio files and notes for use in future research done by myself. I will retain these records for up 2 years after the study is over. The same measures described above will be taken to protect confidentiality of this study data.

How the findings will be used:

The findings of the study will be used for scholarly purposes only. They will be presented in educational settings and at professional conferences, and the results might be published in a professional journal in the fields of Leisure Studies, Cultural Studies, Women Studies and other Social Sciences. As I will ask you about a number of different aspects of your everyday life, leisure, work etc., it is likely that the emergent data will be used to trigger further investigation of the aspects regarding contemporary of women's leisure and the relevant issues.

Contact information:

If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to contact me. I can be reached at 0988 31 80 31 or Stefani.kaldaramov@beds.ac.uk. You can also contact my director of studies - Professor Keith Hollinshead at: Khdeva@btopenworld.com. Additionally, if you have any concerns about this study or the way that you have been approached, please contact the University's independent contact, Prof Angus Duncan, Secretary to the University Research Ethics Committee angus.duncan@beds.ac.uk

By giving your consent, you acknowledge that you have read this information and agree to participate in this research, with the knowledge that you are free to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your own records.

If you wish to participate in this study, please sign and date below.

Participant's Name

Participant's Signature

Date

Appendix 23: Main Study – Interview transcript

<p>Excerpt from a transcript of a semi-structured interview conducted with Ivanka (interviewee's pseudonym) by the researcher (Stefani) in Bulgarian</p> <p>The study problem and sub-problems were explained to the participant The interview was acquainted with the interview procedure and format A copy of the interview guide was provided for the participant No questions were raised by the participant Digital audio-recording device was used</p>	
Stefani/Ivanka	Interview
Stefani Ivanka	What is your name? Ivanka
Stefani Ivanka	How old are you? 28
Stefani Ivanka	What is your current marital status? unmarried/ engaged
Stefani Ivanka	Do you have children? No
Stefani Ivanka	What is your profession/job? I'm an investigative police officer in 5 th precinct in Sofia. I've been working there for 4 years.
Stefani Ivanka	How many hours do you work per week? Officially 40 hours per week. However, we're also working additional shifts during the week or during the weekends. These shifts can last maximum of 24 hours, and they are paid in addition to our salary. An officer can work a couple of these per month.
Stefani Ivanka	Can you tell me about your work? Are you satisfied with your work? Yes, I really like working for the police. I investigate all sorts of criminal offences, like breaking and entering, auto theft, robberies, possession and distribution of illegal drugs etc. I do not deal with are the white collar crimes. I like the type of work; I don't like the work conditions though; our budget is very low and we need to get our own supplies; I've brought my own chair in the precinct and I've painted the walls of my room by myself and at my own expense. Unfortunately, we're nothing like The CSI TV show.
Stefani Ivanka	What are the positive and negative sided of being employed/of working/ having your profession in relation to leisure? I'll start with the negatives, firstly the majority of offenders we are dealing with are members of the Roma community, and others are homeless people, some of whom uneducated and often insolent. They can't speak properly, can read or write and it's tough dealing with them. That is a bad work environment. The prosecutors are a pain too, some of them are quite arrogant too as they are our superiors. How is this affecting my leisure? Well an investigating officer like me never sleeps. I mean, I finish work at 5.30 but I'm always on call. It doesn't matter whether I'm

	<p>on holiday or at home or wherever, I must be easily reached in case there is a situation that needs my attention. We're officers 24/7, that's it. That's how it should be, that's the nature of the profession. We're responsible for the safety of the community and the state.</p> <p>Secondly, the positive is that you constantly meet new and exciting people; people from all walks of life, from bankers and administrative clerks to politicians and even celebrities. When I'm caring on an investigation and I need to interview a witness, it's always exciting and new; no two days are the same it's not boring at all. I think that's important. Also, I've always dreamed of being a police officer even as a little girl; I like bossing people around, and be in charge. So most of the time, when I need to report for duty on a Saturday or Sunday or need to stay after work I do it with a desire to do my job, I don't feel it as a burden. Have in mind that I've been doing it for 4 year now and I should be bored by now, at least a little, but no, I still find the work interesting. The dynamic nature of the job gives me strength to cope with various situations and makes me go to work with a confident smile on my face. Be that as it may, I'm going to bed at 9pm, I get so tired. I sit in front of the TV to watch the CSI, yes I follow it, and I fall asleep right there in front of the TV.</p>
Stefani Ivanka	<p>Could you tell me in your own words what leisure is for you?</p> <p>My leisure is the time I'm not working. I mean besides the extra shifts, from Monday to Friday from 5.30 pm onwards and the weekend. That time includes the usual stuff, watching movies, having walks, shopping, in the summer I swimming in the open-air pool nearby, that's a favourite leisure activity of mine. Last year I went to the gym every day, but this year not that much.</p>
Stefani Ivanka	<p>Are you satisfied with the leisure you have?</p> <p>I would like to have more. Although I'm employed by the ministry of Interior, and I do finish 5.30 daily, especially in the summer, that's great. In the summer the day starts at 5.30 and I have already finished work. I have time to hang out with your friends, have a drink and get home relatively early. However, when its winter I get back home round 6pm, I might cook dinner if I feel like it, but not always, I'm not the greatest housewife ever, then watch some TV, on occasion I might go out for a while.</p>
Stefani Ivanka	<p>What would you change in your life if you could so that you could have more leisure time?</p> <p>I want to become a Minister of the Interior, I would like to fix the ministry's budget, I'm saying this, as if it happens one day, I'll increase the salaries of the police officers and all related professions and they won't need to work overtime or in order to earn more money. Nowadays money is the thing that matters the most in relation to leisure, I reckon. If I earned more money in the first place I would do more interesting things in my leisure. For example, I finish work at 5.30pm; I could go to Vitosha to snowboard at 6pm, just in time for the evening sessions. I could go every night if I wanted to.</p>
Stefani Ivanka	<p>What part of your life is leisure, do you reckon?</p> <p>Unfortunately, a small part because as I said I work additional shifts. I might sound like a workaholic but I actually prefer to be at work because</p>

	<p>it's more exciting than being at home and doing the housework. What I meant to say is that I really enjoy my profession and prefer going to work, even on a Saturday instead of just sitting at home, doing nothing or watching movies or something like that. There are days, of course, in which I've had enough of work.</p>
Stefani Ivanka	<p>How do you choose your leisure?</p> <p>I'm very impulsive when it comes to leisure and choosing what to do or how to spend my time. I rarely make plans and my friends are kind of mad at me about that because I make plans to meet them and then cancel at the last minute, which I know is not cool, but sometimes situations change and I'm not in the mood to go out and they get pissed at me for that.</p>
Stefani Ivanka	<p>In what ways is leisure important to you? Why?</p> <p>Yes, it's important. If a person has enough money to afford it, I think yes. There are a lot of ideas for leisure, especially in Bulgaria; there are so many places you can regardless of the season. Whether you're a thrill seeker and do sports or just want to chill on the beach or lake shore, as long as you've got money to do it. Otherwise, in the city, working out is cheap here. The local gym membership costs 20 lv per month, it's ridiculous.</p>
Stefani Ivanka	<p>As leisure change during the life course, which leisure pursuits would you say you still practice and which ones you don't?</p> <p>Oh gosh yes, with every passing year that we get older we start thinking about the important things in life and forget to have fun. I remember the amazing time we had at the seaside a couple of years ago. Now, if you get 5 days off work to go to the seaside, that's a miracle. Also, now you need to be more careful how you spend your money, you can't waste it and don't really care about it, like we used to. Now it's not like that and with every passing year it gets worst, in my opinion. I used going to the seaside as an example, but it applies to all kinds and types of leisure, snowboarding too. I haven't gone snowboarding for a couple of reasons: it costs money, it takes up a lot of time, and I'm a bit scared now too. On another note, I've always liked reading books and I have a weakness for buying dresses. I have so many dresses, you wouldn't believe. Now I'm trying not to buy anymore because it's become an addiction for me. I don't know if you can call it a hobby or what is it but I can't stop looking for a new one to buy, or look for material and have it sewn. I've stopped for now though, because I'm planning my wedding and can't really afford to spent more money on dresses. The ones I already have, I wear at work but they can be worn for almost every occasion. I think that a woman looks much more feminine in a skirt or a dress, then in jeans or trousers. I ware most of them at work.</p>
Stefani Ivanka	<p>Tell me more about what you usually do after work during the week? What about the weekends?</p> <p>After work I get home round 6.15pm. I turn on the TV and start cooking dinner. If there is laundry to be done, I'd take care of it; I'd fold the cloths too and put them in order in the wardrobe. I like my wardrobe to be in perfect order. My boyfriend gets home round 7pm and we have dinner. We try to have dinner round that time and not late in the evening. We then watch Dr. House, and the CSI and we go to bed after that. Sometimes we might go out with one of our neighbours; we've got so</p>

	<p>many bars around here. That's mostly during the winter. Sometimes I might go out with a girlfriend of mine but I'm not that keen on going out during the winter. In the summer though, I always try to meet with a friend after work; I don't go straight back home to cook. If I decide to cook, that will be during the weekend. If I'm off both Saturday and Sunday, we would visit the parents and if we have extra money we might go to the movies or catch up with friends. Krum goes to the gym while, I'm at home just doing this and that. We clean the flat at least once a week; he helps me with the cleaning, we do it together. And in summer, if it's sunny and warm we go to the swimming pool.</p>
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Source: Author's work

Appendix 24: Screenshots of thematic coding done in NVivo 11

Image 1: Main themes and sub-themes

The Dialectics of Wome's Leisure (NVivo 11).nvp - NVivo Pro

DATA ANALYZE QUERY EXPLORE LAYOUT VIEW

Look for: Search In: Thematic codin Find Now Clear Advanced Find

Thematic coding analysis of Main study transcripts

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On
CONSTRUCTION & PERCEPTION of of gender (roles) ideologies	0	0	02.03.2016 15:13 u.	S.K	17.05.2016 15:48 u.
LEISURE AS RESISTANCE	0	0	02.03.2016 15:22 u.	S.K	07.04.2016 13:36 u.
Miscellaneous	0	0	11.05.2016 15:06 u.	S.K	11.05.2016 15:06 u.
PAID WORK - LEISURE INTRFACE	0	0	02.03.2016 15:00 u.	S.K	18.05.2016 15:42 u.
Conceptualising women's work	0	0	02.03.2016 15:54 u.	S.K	19.05.2016 13:23 u.
Conceptualising Leisure	0	0	02.03.2016 16:39 u.	S.K	03.03.2016 17:54 u.
Gendered meaning of leisure (d.theme)	0	0	12.05.2016 12:48 u.	S.K	12.05.2016 12:51 u.
Benefits and Outcomes (d)	0	0	12.05.2016 13:11 u.	S.K	12.05.2016 14:32 u.
Containers or Opportunities (d)	0	0	12.05.2016 13:31 u.	S.K	12.05.2016 14:32 u.
Life Situation (Class) (d)	0	0	12.05.2016 14:21 u.	S.K	12.05.2016 14:32 u.
Negotiated Constraints (d)	0	0	12.05.2016 14:05 u.	S.K	12.05.2016 14:33 u.
Self-expression, self-actualization, self-improvement	4	5	12.05.2016 16:19 u.	S.K	20.05.2016 13:33 u.
Social contact	11	17	13.05.2016 12:26 u.	S.K	20.05.2016 15:03 u.
Values and Entitlement (d)	0	0	12.05.2016 13:01 u.	S.K	12.05.2016 14:33 u.

Image 2: Coding hierarchy

FILE HOME CREATE DATA ANALYZE QUERY EXPLORE LAYOUT VIEW

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Nodes

Thematic coding analysis of Main study transcripts

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
PAID WORK - LEISURE INTRFACE	0	0	02.03.2016 15:00 u.	S.K	18.05.2016 15:42 u.	S.K
Conceptualising Leisure	0	0	02.03.2016 16:39 u.	S.K	03.03.2016 17:54 u.	S.K
Gendered meaning of leisure (d.theme)	0	0	12.05.2016 12:48 u.	S.K	12.05.2016 12:51 u.	S.K
Conceptualising S. women's work MEANINGS of work	0	0	02.03.2016 15:54 u.	S.K	21.06.2016 16:10 u.	S.K
(5)Benefits of being employed	0	0	02.03.2016 15:53 u.	S.K	22.06.2016 15:04 u.	S.K
(4)Normalisation of non-standard working hours	11	12	02.03.2016 15:41 u.	S.K	22.06.2016 15:35 u.	S.K
(1)The value and significance of work	0	0	11.03.2016 18:36 u.	S.K	23.06.2016 14:01 u.	S.K
(2)Work satisfaction	0	0	02.03.2016 15:42 u.	S.K	22.06.2016 12:43 u.	S.K
Low level of satisfaction	2	2	02.03.2016 15:45 u.	S.K	12.03.2016 17:31 u.	S.K
High level of satisfaction	9	11	02.03.2016 15:44 u.	S.K	16.05.2016 15:07 u.	S.K
Miscellaneous	0	0	11.05.2016 15:06 u.	S.K	11.05.2016 15:06 u.	S.K
Construction, perception and enactment of gender roles	0	0	14.06.2016 12:11 u.	S.K	14.06.2016 12:11 u.	S.K
wom(3)en's perceptions of the gender roles within work setting	0	0	17.05.2016 14:30 u.	S.K	03.07.2016 14:28 u.	S.K
(2)Views on Femininity and Gender equality	0	0	21.03.2016 13:57 u.	S.K	03.07.2016 17:22 u.	S.K
(1)Empowerment through work self worth insentive	3	3	22.03.2016 15:03 u.	S.K	03.07.2016 14:36 u.	S.K

Source: Author's work